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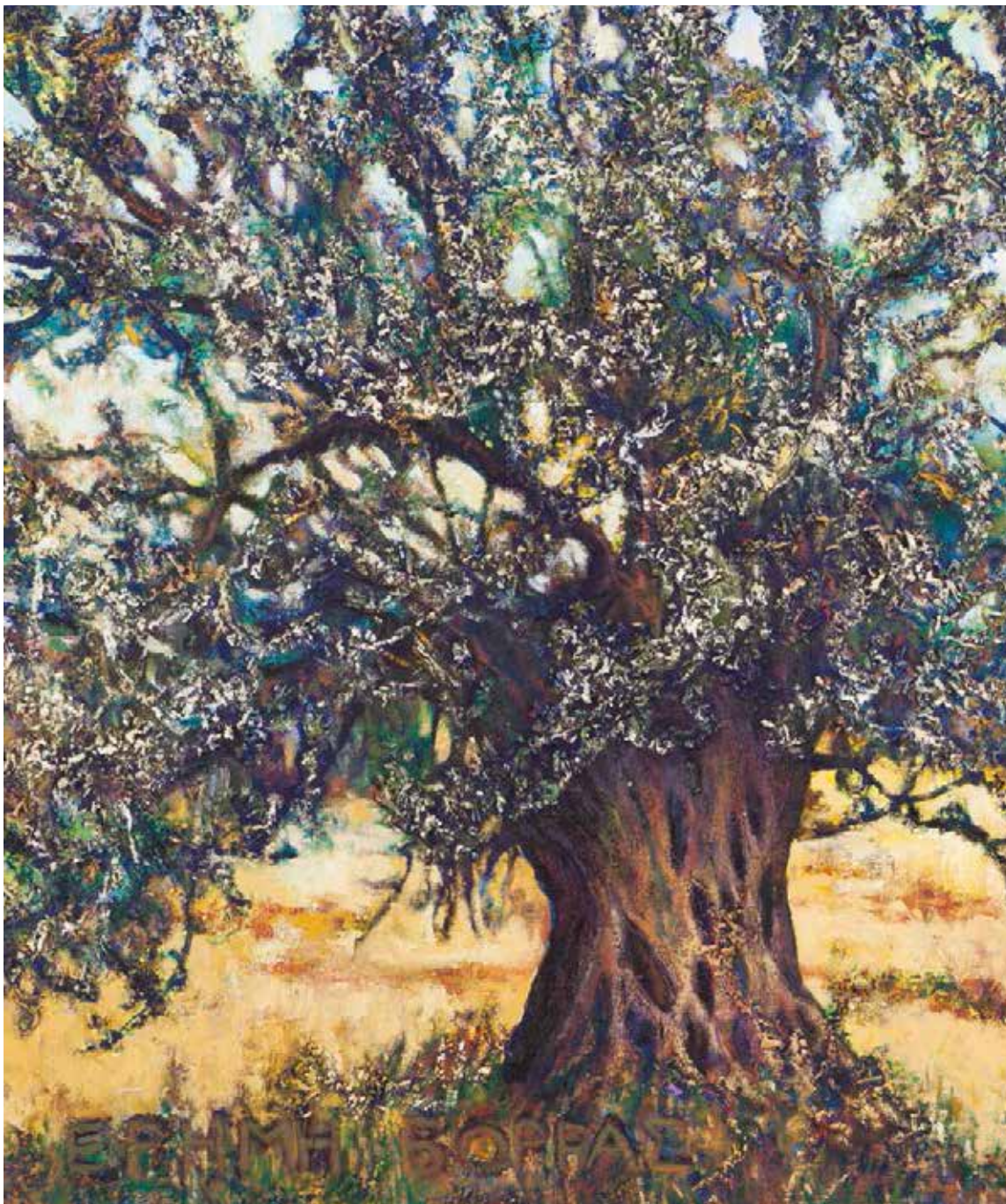
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I chose to study with the OCA in 2004, as I realised I could fulfil a dream of obtaining an art degree while living abroad in Cyprus, where it was not possible to do so. The diversity of the course projects helped me to draw out my inner artist. That directed me on my personal pathway as an artist in my own right. I found OCA's flexible study options enabled me to continue even when I had difficult life obstacles thrown at me. I am thrilled to say I have just completed my painting degree and achieved my dream!

Sheila Demetriou
Painting student

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PAINTING WITH A SENSE OF ADVENTURE



Art is a fantastic way of recording the world around us. When we see new sights or experience new feelings, there is nothing more challenging, frustrating and yet ultimately satisfying than trying to document it with a pencil or paintbrush.

This month, we are celebrating a slightly more extreme version of that impulse. The three artists featured in our Art Adventures special, starting on page 17, have all gone out of their way to discover fresh subject matter. Not for them the familiarity of a local landscape or even the comfort of an all-inclusive painting holiday. No, our intrepid artists have ventured across Asia, America and Africa, often to places where no one has ever painted before. What unifies them, whether they are painting reformed gangsters or hidden temples, is an insatiable desire to challenge their practice and keep things fresh. I hope that this enthusiasm comes across in their remarkable stories and unusual artworks.


So whether we inspire you to venture to paint an unusual destination or just admire the skill and ambition of these artists, I hope we succeed in expanding your horizons and instilling a sense of adventure a little along the way.


Steve Pill, Editor

Get in touch

Have you been on an art adventure recently? Share your stories and pictures with us and we'll print the best ones...

 info@artistsandillustrators.co.uk

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EDITORIAL Editor Steve Pill **Art Editor** Alicia Fernandes **Assistant Editor** Terri Eaton **Contributors** Ray Balkwill, Grahame Booth, Laura Boswell, Nick Dines, Aine Divine, Ben Grafton, Louise Hagger, Mark Harrison, Anna Mason, Carl Purcell, Laura Rich and Ruby Taylor **ONLINE ENQUIRIES** support@artistsandillustrators.co.uk
ADVERTISING Advertisement Manager Tom O'Byrne (020) 7349 3738 tom.obyrne@chelseamagazines.com Sales Executive Erika Stone (020) 7349 3739 erika.stone@chelseamagazines.com Advertising Production allpointsmidia.co.uk **MANAGEMENT & PUBLISHING** Managing Director Paul Dobson Deputy Managing Director Steve Ross Publisher Simon Temlett Commercial Director Vicki Gavin Head of Marketing Will Delmont Digital Media Manager James Dobson
SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BACK ISSUES Artists & Illustrators, Subscriptions Department, 800 Guillat Avenue, Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8GU artists@servicehelpline.co.uk (01795) 419838 artists.subscribeonline.co.uk

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HOW TO BECOME A BETTER PAINTER with

MARTIN KINNEAR

Why the Norfolk Painting School's head tutor thinks all oil painters should be taught practical skills

What's the secret of becoming a better painter?

With so many people wanting to achieve their dream of becoming a painter, it's important to realise that painting can be learned just like any other skill.

Unfortunately there's no hidden secret to learning to paint except this: Good painters learn from actively studying great ones.



Traditional Glazing Skills

At the Norfolk Painting School we put this tried and tested method at the heart of our tuition, because contemporary artists need real skills training just as much as they need creative freedom.

For our students, techniques drive inspiration and inspiration flowers into creativity - it's the way all great painters learned, and it works just as well today.

One incredible year to change your painting

Seven years ago we decided that painting should be taught again, and we've helped hundreds of painters develop their skills, but our students wanted a course that covered everything from traditional glazing to contemporary realism and helped them to develop a personal style.

In 2015 we launched a One Year Diploma in Oil Painting offering a chance for a handful of students to get the very best start to their painting careers, through an intensive program of structured, practical study.

Aimed at developing exciting contemporary artists the Norfolk Painting School Diploma is a challenging, varied and structured course in applied oil painting. An incredible year of learning and exploration, aimed at making you a better painter.

More affordable than full time Fine Art courses, creatively broader than Ateliers and developed to fit around work and family commitments. Our Diploma is based around residential workshops each backed up by a structured and moderated month of home study.

In the words of a current student, *'There is breadth and depth to the course. What has worked very well for me is the 3 days a month intensive tuition at the studio followed by structured and creative painting and research into artists styles at home for the rest of the month. This helps me embed the learning and prepare for the next step forward.'*



Colour and Brushwork Skills

Each workshop focusses on a key aspect of oil painting, from Monet's breathtaking mastery of colour to Turner's innovative studio craft, all aimed squarely at empowering you to become the best painter you can be.

Highly structured, yet aimed at developing individual creativity, the Diploma is selective and offers stimulating learning within a group of ten like minded painters, plus ample 121 tuition.

To see the full Diploma program, simply go online and download our brochure.

Realise your dream of becoming a painter in 2016

We're looking for exciting, talented, energetic and articulate painters to apply to join our 2016 Diploma programs.

We think it's the best course in applied oil painting you can find, but don't take our word for it - we're hosting two special Diploma Taster days at the School, to see if it's right for you, on **July 22 and September 9 2015**.

Places on the Taster days are limited and cost £150, which will count towards the cost of the Diploma should you be selected and wish to join, see our free Diploma Taster information PDF for details.

To take part 01328 730203 or e-mail jane@norfolkpaintingschool.com and ask for the Diploma Taster information PDF.

'Whether you live to paint or paint to live, Martin's utter professionalism answers all the questions.

I am so happy to be moving forwards quickly and methodically, whilst developing my personal style and creativity. Just what I have always wanted!'

G. Farren-Smith Diploma 2015.

[Read more reviews online.](#)

YOUR LETTERS...

LETTER OF THE MONTH

WHY IS BRERA RARER?

You often mention or feature acrylic paints by Winsor & Newton, Daler-Rowney and Golden, but I have never seen a mention of Brera Acrylics by Maimeri. The colour chart is hand-painted and the paint looks and feels lovely to use. I hope you can publish something on them one day.
Anne, Milford on Sea, Hants

Much of that is down to availability, Anne. While hugely popular in Italy, the Brera range isn't officially available here in the UK. However, we do have good news for you. After receiving your letter, we asked the team at Maimeri's UK distributor, Premium Art Brands, about the Brera range and they have told us they are hoping to bring them to the UK "over the next six to 12 months" along with "a number of other Maimeri ranges". Keep an eye out for more news soon!



YOUR STUDIO PICTURES

RE: Editor's Letter, Issue 351

I thought I would send you a picture of my studio space in St. Nicholas Market in Bristol where I paint every day. It is also where I sell my artwork, including t-shirts with my own designs.
Victoria Clothier, via email

THE BIG PAINTING CONTROVERSY?

RE: Great British Paint Off, Issue 350

If the aim of BBC One's *The Big Painting Challenge* is to get people

painting I feel it could very easily have the opposite effect.

I took up watercolour painting in readiness for my retirement and I derive a huge amount of pleasure from it, even though things don't always turn out as planned. I enjoyed the show and I know we only see edited highlights, but I am not sure it will entice anyone to pick up a brush.
Julie Bird, Farnham, Surrey

I know that the judges have to view the contestants as they work but it would have been very interesting to see how they themselves would have coped with such a difficult subject.

If there is a second series then maybe different guest professional artists could be included to show how they tackle a particular challenge?
Colin Wood, via email

Mark Boyd's letter of the month [Issue 351] disagreed with Daphne Todd's remark about criticism being levelled at not only the artwork but also at the artists themselves. How can criticism not be taken personally though? If an artwork comes from our own head, eye and hand, it's very personal. Getting constructive

write to us

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criticism on my work from someone as professional and talented as Daphne Todd would be more than wonderful, even though it would hurt.
Susan Lynch, via email

Mark Boyd's advice to distance oneself from criticism of one's art was a luxury not open to us on *The Big Painting Challenge*. It had to be taken on the chin; all argument and discussion was cut. Some of the judges' comments were hurtful, even rude – certainly not constructive. Luckily, having been classified repeatedly as an "illustrator", I didn't feel a thing!

Anthea Lay, The Big Painting Challenge contestant, via email

A GRAND DAY OUT

RE: Notebook, Issue 350

What a great surprise to see a photo of myself painting at Pinter Rapido in the latest edition of your excellent magazine. It brought back wonderful memories of a fantastic day and I would strongly recommend everyone interested to give it a go. It's a great confidence booster to see your work exhibited in Chelsea Old Town Hall – and even more so when it sells! I can't wait until the next event.

Mark Wadeson, via email



keep in touch



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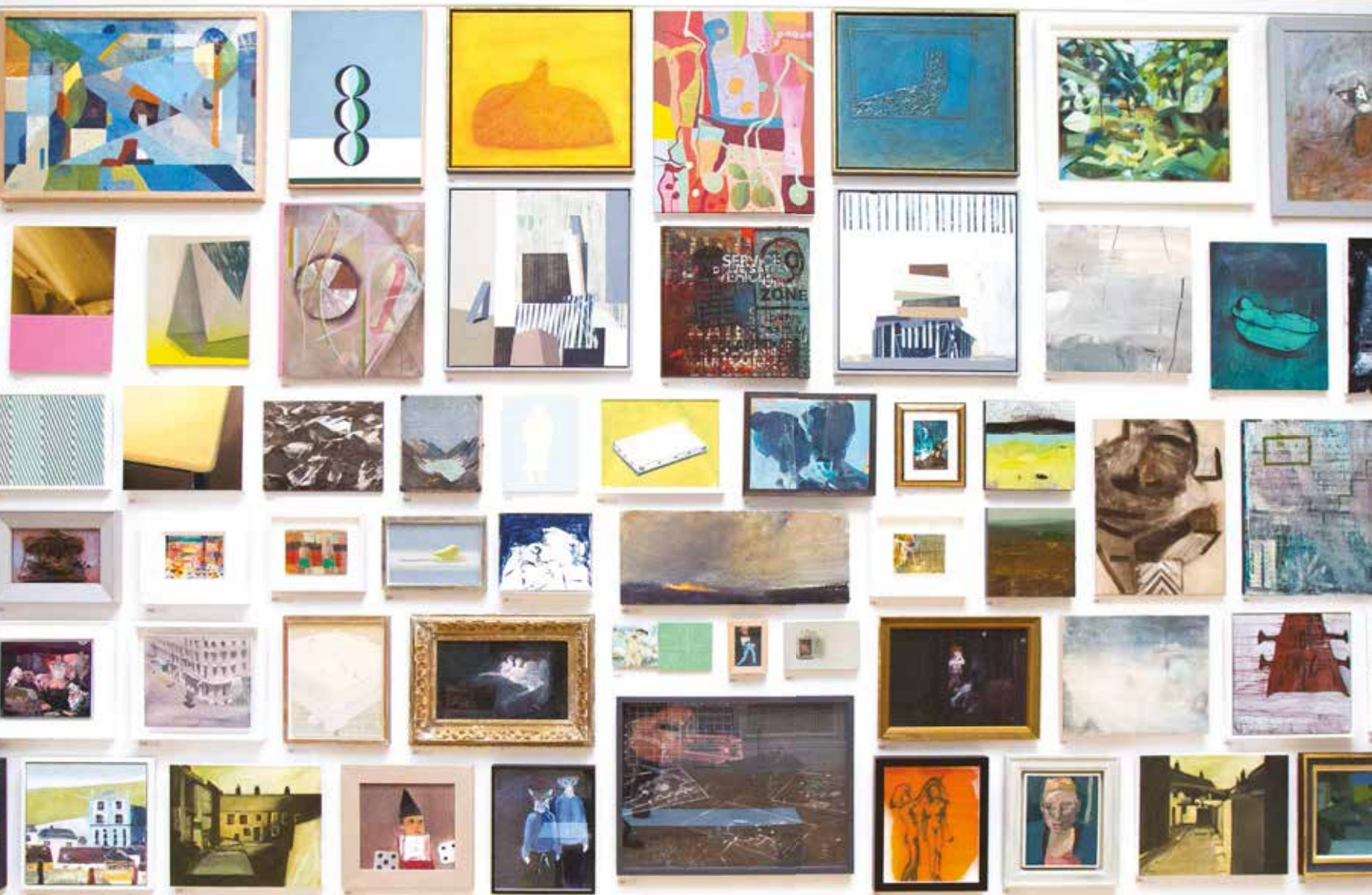
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JUNE



IT'S ALL ACADEMIC

With 12,000 entries, 200,000 visitors and 247 years worth of history to uphold, the annual *Summer Exhibition* at London's Royal Academy of Arts remains the world's largest open exhibition. Michael Craig-Martin had the unenviable task of co-ordinating this year's show (8 June to 16 August), marshalling the hanging committee to select 1,000 artworks for display. Meanwhile, painter Alan Robb convened the Royal Scottish Academy's *189th Annual Exhibition* at the RSA Building, Edinburgh (25 April to 3 June). Not to be outdone, the Royal Ulster Academy of Arts is now welcoming submissions for its own *134th Annual Exhibition* in October. Enter online at www.royalulsteracademy.org before midnight on 17 June 2015.



PINTAR RAPIDO COMING TO SCOTLAND

Scottish artists are in for a treat as the UK's largest outdoor painting festival heads north of the border. Pintar Rapido Glasgow will see hundreds of professional and amateur artists take up the challenge of creating a plein air painting in a single day. The following day will see all the artworks go on display at the

Royal Concert Hall, with all works for sale and a £1,000 Pintar Prize up for grabs.

Artists & Illustrators is proud to be media partners with Pintar Rapido for the third successive year. Pintar Rapido Glasgow runs 15-16 August and Pintar Rapido London runs 11-12 July. Sign up at www.pintarrapido.com

NEXT ISSUE: MARK MAKING – A TECHNIQUE SPECIAL • JACKSON POLLOCK • V&A ILLUSTRATOR OF THE YEAR • ON SALE 22 MAY 2015

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

JERWOOD DRAWING PRIZE

Brief: Artist Dexter Dalwood is among the selectors for this competition, which focuses on contemporary drawing practice.

Deadline: 26 June, 5pm

Exhibition: 16 September to 25 October at the Jerwood Space, London

Enter online and more info: www.jerwoodvisualarts.org

HENNESSY PORTRAIT PRIZE

Brief: Ireland's equivalent of the BP Portrait Award returns with a first prize of 15,000 euros and a commission worth 5,000 euros to produce a portrait for the collection.

Deadline: 31 July, midnight

Exhibition: November 2015 to February 2016 at the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin

Enter online and more info: www.nationalgallery.ie

THE SUNDAY TIMES WATERCOLOUR COMPETITION

Brief: Now in its 28th year, this open show has a prize fund of £18,000. Works are accepted in all water-based media.

Online submission:

15 June, 5pm

Exhibition: 14-19 September at Mall Galleries, London SW1

Enter online and more info: www.parkerharris.co.uk

FLYING COLOURS



We loved Jamel Akib's *Chaffinch*, above, which manages the tricky task of conveying a sense of movement. The painting features in the *Wildlife Artist of the Year 2015* exhibition, which runs from 30 June to 4 July at Mall Galleries, London SW1.

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EXHIBITIONS

JUNE'S BEST ART SHOWS

ENGLAND - LONDON

Unfinished

18 June to 20 September

Learn about artistic process via incomplete works.
Courtauld Gallery. www.courtauld.ac.uk

Ravilious

Until 31 August

Eric's joyous early 20th-century watercolours.
Dulwich Picture Gallery. www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk

The Prize for Illustration 2015

Until 6 September

On the theme of 'London Places and Spaces'.
London Transport Museum. www.ltmuseum.co.uk

Painting Paradise: The Art of the Garden

Until 11 October

Horticultural art by Da Vinci, Rembrandt and more.
Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace.
www.royalcollection.org.uk

Barbara Hepworth: Sculpture for a Modern World

24 June to 25 October

A first major London exhibition in almost 50 years.
Tate Britain. www.tate.org.uk

Agnes Martin

3 June to 11 October

Pale, evocative abstracts from the 1960s.
Tate Modern. www.tate.org.uk

V&A Illustration Awards 2015

19 May to 12 July

Highlighting the year's best published works.
Victoria and Albert Museum. www.vam.ac.uk

ENGLAND - NORTH

Taking Flight: St Ives in the 1950s

26 June to 3 October

Five early explorers of abstract art.
Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Cumbria. www.abbothall.org.uk

Evelyn de Morgan: Artist of Peace

Until 13 September

Dream-like portraiture by the pacifist painter.
Blackwell, The Arts & Crafts House, Cumbria.
www.blackwell.org.uk

Sarah Pickstone: The Rehearsal

Until 5 July

Dance-themed works inspired by Dame Laura Knight.
Mercer Art Gallery, Harrogate. www.harrogate.gov.uk

George Morland: In the Margins

Until 11 July

Paintings of smugglers, gypsies and soldiers.
Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery, Leeds.
library.leeds.ac.uk/art-gallery

Cornish Light

Until 7 June

An 1894 display of Cornwall paintings recreated.
Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery.
www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/nottinghamcastle

A Cultural Legacy: Remembering Frank Constantine

13 June to 29 August

The former director's artistic acquisitions.
Graves Gallery, Sheffield.
www.museums-sheffield.org.uk

BP PORTRAIT AWARD 2015

18 June to 20 September

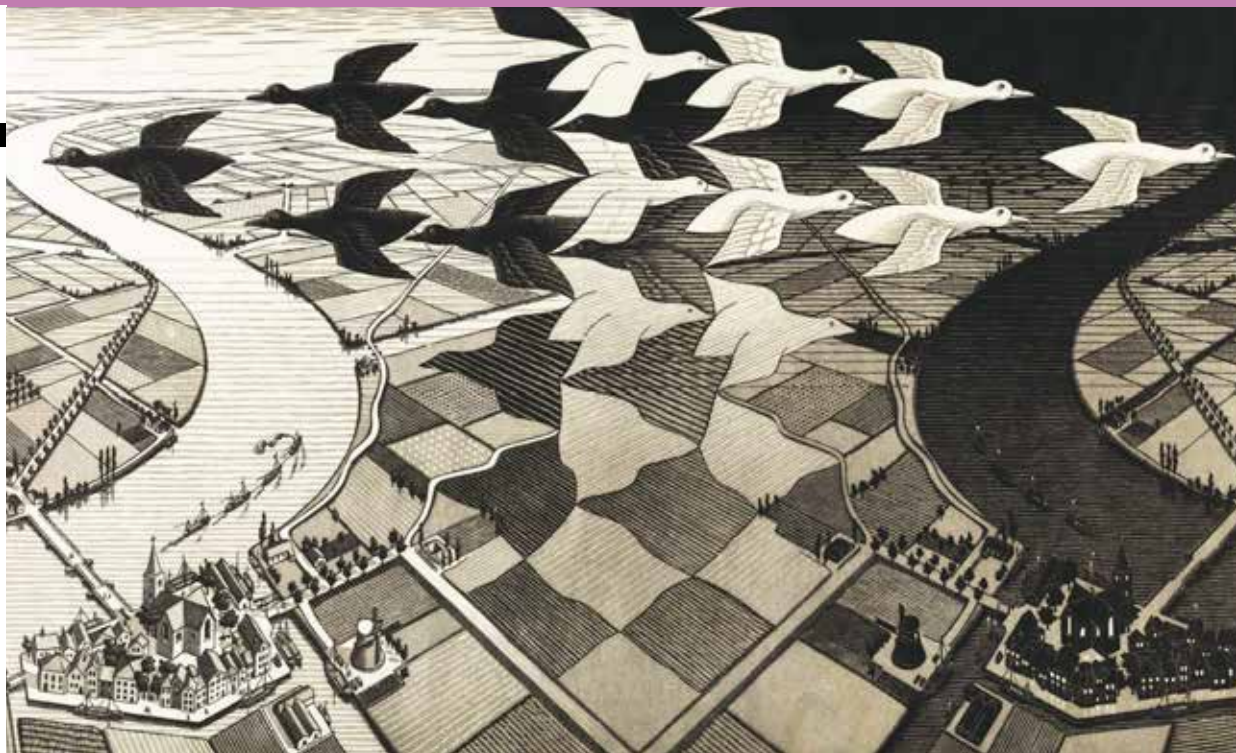
It will be interesting to see how the introduction of a new digital-only first round of judging affects the "Portraiture Oscars" this year. The awards recently championed more painterly submissions (including Richard Twose's 2014 runner-up, *Jean Woods*, left), so will we see a return to photorealistic art dominating in 2015?
National Portrait Gallery, London WC2.
www.npg.org.uk



THE AMAZING WORLD OF MC ESCHER

27 June to 27 September

A favourite of many teenage art students, Maurits Cornelis Escher is often overlooked in discussions about the 20th-century greats. This huge display of prints and drawings is set to remind us how his 1930s experiments with “mental imagery” resulted in a memorable and unique portfolio. Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh.
www.nationalgalleries.org



Picturing Venice

1 May to 27 September

Inspiring collection of Grand Tour paintings.
Lady Lever Art Gallery, Wirral.
www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ladylever

ENGLAND – SOUTH

Into the Fields: The Newlyn School and Other Artists

20 June to 6 September

Rural realist scenes from 19th-century Cornwall.
Royal West of England Academy, Bristol. www.rwa.org.uk

Alphonse Mucha: In Quest of Beauty

Until 27 August

Elegant art deco portraits featured in our May issue.
Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth. www.russellcotes.com

Drawing the Nude: From Manet to Auerbach

20 May to 19 July

Free display of masterful figure drawings.
Pallant House Gallery, Chichester. www.pallant.org.uk

The Creative Genius of Stanley Spencer

Until 1 November

Unmissable display of spiritual and figurative art.
Stanley Spencer Gallery, Cookham, Berkshire.
www.stanleypencer.org.uk

The Art of Bedlam: Richard Dadd

16 June to 1 November

Haunting illustrations made in a psychiatric ward.
Watts Gallery, Guildford. www.wattsgallery.org.uk

Lowry by the Sea

10 June to 1 November

The much-loved Northerner's coastal scenes.
Jerwood Gallery, Hastings. www.jerwoodgallery.org

Grayson Perry: Provincial Punk

23 May to 13 September

Assessing modern life through contemporary crafts.
Turner Contemporary, Margate.
www.turnercontemporary.org

Francis Bacon and the Masters

Until 26 July

Exploring his obsession with Titian, Picasso and co.
Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich.
www.scva.ac.uk

Great British Drawings

Until 31 August

From Thomas Gainsborough to Gwen John.
Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford.
www.ashmolean.org

Images Moving Out Onto Space

23 May to 27 September

What happens when artworks are set in motion?
Tate St Ives, St Ives, Cornwall. www.tate.org.uk

SCOTLAND

Human Presence

Until 31 March 2017

Witty, playful and sinister figurative paintings.
Drum Castle, Aberdeenshire.
www.nts.org.uk/drumcastle

Lee Miller and Picasso

23 May to 6 September

Photos and artworks charting their relationship.

Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh.
www.nationalgalleries.org

Duncan Shanks: Sketchbooks

Until 16 August

Personal drawings of the Clyde valley.
Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow. www.gla.ac.uk

WALES

In Black and White – Charles Tunnicliffe and the Art of Scaperboard

20 June to 6 December

Original book illustrations and commercial work.
Oriel Charles Tunnicliffe, Anglesey.
www.kyffinwilliams.info

Bill Kneale: The Sea

13 June to 2 August

Local coast landscapes using bold strokes.
Oriel Ynys Môn, Anglesey. www.kyffinwilliams.info

D. Alun Evans: Land Marks

Until 27 June

Natural and industrial landscapes.
MOMA Wales, Powys. www.momawales.org.uk

IRELAND

Sean Scully: Figure Abstract

26 June to 12 September

Early figurative art by the abstract master.
Crawford Art Gallery, Cork. www.crawfordartgallery.ie

Etel Adnan

6 June to 13 September

Paintings and poems by the Beirut-born artist.
Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin. www.imma.ie

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BOOK



OF THE MONTH



Former *Artists & Illustrators* contributor Curtis Tappenden launches two new pocket art guides this month. Our pick of the pair is *Practical Watercolours* (Ivy Press, £7.99), which applies the medium to dozens of different everyday situations. There are no step-by-step demonstrations here, just project ideas and useful advice from the veteran illustrator, all packaged together in a loose yet personal sketchbook style. A second volume, *Practical Pastels*, is also released.



IN BRIEF

- **Eastern promise**

The inaugural *Art Fair East* launches on 4-7 June at Norwich's St Andrews Hall. Lara Cobden's *An Oak and a Willow* (left) is among the works on sale. For details, visit www.artfaireast.com

- **Sketchy politics**

Former Jerwood Drawing Prize winner Adam Dant has become the fourth artist

selected by the House of Commons to document the General Election. He plans to travel the UK drawing voters going to the polls on 7 May.

- **Just the ticket**

Visitors to the Bath Society of Artists' *Annual Exhibition 2015* (16 May to 27 June at Victoria Art Gallery, Bath) can purchase a £1 lottery ticket, with the chance to win unique original artworks. Find out more at www.bsartists.co.uk

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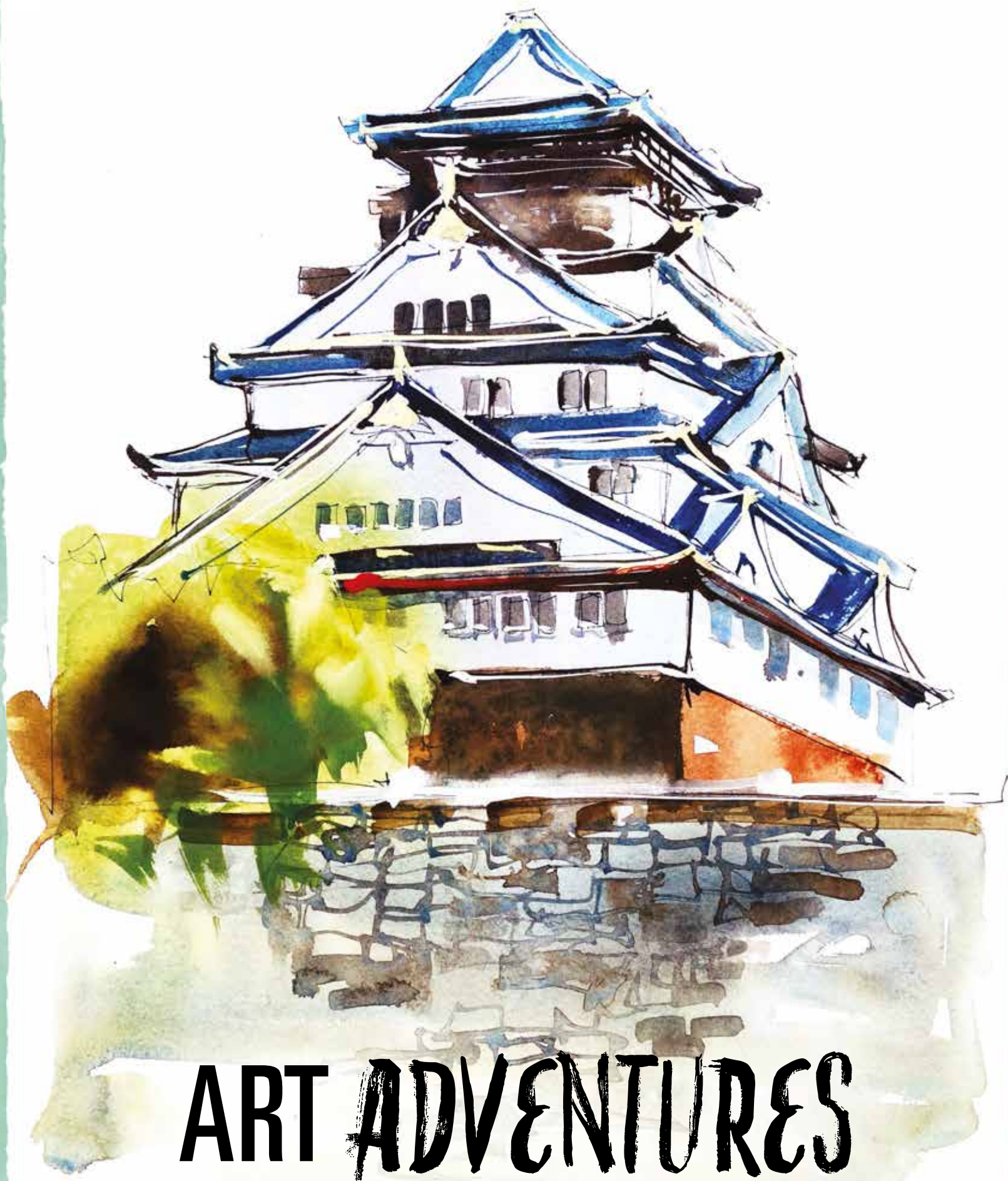


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ART ADVENTURES

OVER THE NEXT EIGHT PAGES, THREE INTREPID PAINTERS SHARE PHOTOS AND ARTWORKS FROM THEIR LATEST VISITS TO OFF-THE-BEATEN TRACK LOCATIONS IN AFRICA, AMERICA AND THE FAR EAST. IF THEIR STORIES GIVE YOU A TASTE FOR ADVENTURE, ART SAFARI HAS ADVICE FOR WANNABE TRAVELLERS ON PAGE 24... WORDS: **TERRI EATON** AND **STEVE PILL**

CRAIG PENNY IN

JAPAN

THE AUSTRALIAN PAINTING TUTOR SKETCHES
IN KYOTO AND OSAKA'S ANCIENT TEMPLES

Craig Penny is no stranger when it comes to venturing far and wide in search of new subjects. The Australian artist's current schedule of painting holidays takes in everywhere from the Angkor Wat temples of Cambodia and the remote South Pacific island of Norfolk, to places more familiar to British audiences, such as the gorgeous French city of Aix-en-Provence. His latest venture will see him host a sketchbook-oriented 12-day visit to a new destination: Japan.

Prior to embarking on his first research trip, Craig imagined Japan to be all cherry blossoms and Zen gardens, samurai warriors and geisha girls. While all of these were a feature of both his trip and the sketches that he made on it, he also found much more to the country than first expected. "These sketches are my fanciful depictions of places and scenes of what I dream Japan to be," he says.

Craig began his research trip in Kyoto, Japan's second city and the epicentre for the country's classical art and culture. It was here that the full scope of contemporary Japan first hit home. "In the preserved streets of today you can see the beautifully restored *machiya* [traditional wooden townhouses] nestled among office blocks and convenience stores; ancient working shrines viewed through the glass walls of Starbucks like this amazing living fresco."

The temptation to paint only increased as Craig made his way out of the city. He followed the famous 'Philosopher's Walk' through the foothills around Kyoto, which takes in world heritage temples and more modern places of worship – the homes of local movie stars. From here he was able to explore the many shrines and ancient mossy gardens that dot the local landscape, admire Mount Arashiyama way off in the distance and try to get a handle on this most enigmatic of cities. "From the hill temples you can look back over the cityscape with the Kamo River defining the boundaries of the urban sprawl like a brushstroke. It slices off a juicy portion that is highly prized and represents the closely guarded heritage of this land," he says. "All this was fodder for my camera, paints and brushes. I hope I have done these scenes justice."

Rather aptly, Craig favours using Japanese ink brushes. "They are ideal for making small, quick works using inks over the top of watercolours that hint at the foliage and

**"THESE
SKETCHES ARE
MY FANCIFUL
DEPICTIONS
OF WHAT
I DREAM
JAPAN TO BE"**

TOP RIGHT

*Silver Pavilion,
Ginkaku-ji, Kyoto,*
watercolour on
paper

PREVIOUS PAGE

Osaka Castle,
watercolour on
paper

colours of my scenes," he says. He will often sketch a scene in pencil before applying watercolour washes and working back into them with either inks or a bold mix of Phthalo Blue or Red Violet. "By giving myself only a short time to capture a scene helps me focus on the critical elements of the sketch," he says. "It is what you leave out sometimes that enlivens the images."

Craig also visited Osaka and the famed green tea plantations to the northeast of the city. "The tea fields have their own way of being," he says of the experience. "The rows become areas of colour that combine to form a glorious abstract pattern across the hills. Imagine a field of brilliant greens and soft creams of the camellia style flowers of the tea bushes set against a glorious blue sky."

Craig was joined on this particular leg of his journey by the local artist Shigeru who gave him an insight into the dedication expected of Japanese painters. Famed for their work ethic in business and beyond, the Japanese clearly adhere to the idea that it takes at least 10,000 hours for anyone to master a discipline, as Craig discovered: "I am told that, with dedication, I too may be able to paint like Shigeru."

With final visits paid to bamboo forests, kimono fashion shoots, sumi-e art galleries and yet more moss-covered temples, Craig packed a lot into his Oriental adventure, but it has definitely left him hungry for more.

"Japan?" he says, "I can hardly wait to return."

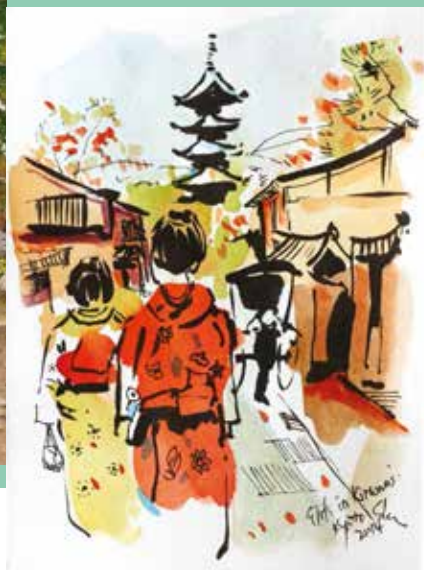
Craig Penny hosts *The Sketchbook Tour of Japan* from 2-13 November 2015 and 1-12 November 2016.

www.craigpennyart.com.au





LEFT TO RIGHT A sketch of Kyoto's Temple Gardens; a girl in a traditional kimono; a street sketch in Kyoto; Osaka Castle





CLOCKWISE FROM
LEFT Caroline
paints at Matopos
Hills; oil sketching
at Victoria Falls;
a selection of her
portraits including
"Taffy" (top right)
and Richard
Nyathi (right).



CAROLINE DE PEYRECAVE IN



ZIMBABWE

THE SOCIETY OF WOMEN ARTISTS MEMBER ON HER INSPIRING AFRICAN TRAVELS

When you hear that an artist is destined for Africa, the presumption is that they are headed to the Serengeti or Maasai Mara in search of elephants and lions. London-based painter Caroline de Peyrecave had other things on her mind though when she made her first visit to Zimbabwe in January of this year.

The Society of Women Artists member was keen to focus not on the local wildlife but the local people instead. Despite being well renowned for her ability to create formal portraits of the Royal family or former prime ministers, Caroline actually enjoyed the more off-the-cuff moments that her trip provided. "As an artist I am naturally drawn to painting people in less contrived settings as they are going about their daily business, and I was fortunate to have plenty of opportunities to do this."

Flying to the capital of Harare, Caroline made her way to Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second largest city, driving through the Hwange National Park and the Matopos Hills. Accompanied by guides and park rangers, she couldn't resist the opportunity to paint the vast landscape first, before heading to the city where the real work would begin.

Caroline stayed with a very welcoming local family on the rural outskirts of Bulawayo, from where she was able to explore all corners of the city. Visits were made to the bustling Mkambo market, the poorer shopping streets of Siloweze and the National Gallery of Zimbabwe in downtown Bulawayo.

The gallery houses artist studios upstairs so Caroline was able to compare artworks and techniques with several of the residents. One such artist, Tafadzwa or 'Taffy', proved particularly inspiring. "While chatting to me about his work, I sketched him and took a few photos. I found Taffy's face really individual and quirky, perhaps because his personality distinctly shines through."

The main focus of her portraiture was the local albino population. "Getting the opportunity to paint them was one of the driving forces in my travels," she says. She was able to meet with the Zimbabwean Albinism Society thanks to an introduction from Richard Nyathi, an albino who works at the local library.

Richard also sat for a portrait. "He was a real pleasure to paint," she says of the sitting. "I was really inspired by the variety of Cobalt Blue, Vermillion and Indian Red hues that were present in his features and I loved drawing attention to them in the painting. He has wonderful heavy eyelids and a curious blend of vulnerability mixed with determination."

Having trained at the acclaimed Charles H Cecil Studios in Florence, Caroline is well versed in good studio practice, but working in the field provided a new set of challenges. She packed a portable easel, a palette of earthy oil colours and a stack of about 50 wooden panels that she had pre-primed before her trip.

"I had never painted on wooden panels before, but they were a more practical alternative to stretched canvas while I was travelling," she explains. "I found the boards soaked up the paint at a much faster rate than a canvas would, even though they were primed. This meant that, with the added issue of the hot weather making the oil paint dry faster, I had to paint very quickly."

Rather than hindering her progress, this tight timeframe helped Caroline in her ambition to emulate her artistic hero, John Singer Sargent. "I wanted to paint from life, working quickly, wet into wet, capturing as much of the essence of each face as I could. I like to push the boundaries of the traditional painting method by having larger, carefully placed brushmarks that still work from the viewing distance."

Caroline's trip concluded at Mosi-oa-Tunya or Victoria Falls, a UNESCO World Heritage Site on the border with Zambia. Measuring more than 1.7 kilometres wide and 108 metres tall at its highest point, the falls are the largest in the world.

"I was struck by the sheer scale and beauty of the place," says the artist. "With a limited amount of time available, it was quite a challenge to complete all of the works that I wanted, but I managed to make six sketches in five hours – a challenge that was made all the more interesting for having a herd of baboons for company!"

As we go to press, Caroline has already returned to Zimbabwe to concentrate on making more work for a solo exhibition in London this autumn.

She plans to stay in both Harare and Bulawayo on this trip, as well as spending time at the Sethule orphanage with the aim of teaching art to the children and also painting their portraits. It promises to be another inspiring adventure for this intrepid artist.

Caroline's exhibition, *Faces and Places – Rajasthan and Southern Africa*, runs from 21-26 September at 54 The Gallery, London W1. www.carolinedepeyrecave.co.uk

**"IT WAS QUITE
A CHALLENGE
TO PAINT AT
VICTORIA FALLS
WITH A HERD OF
BABOONS FOR
COMPANY"**

EDWARD SUTCLIFFE IN

AMERICA

THE *BP TRAVEL AWARD* WINNER ON PAINTING
A DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES CRICKET CLUB

The city of Compton in Los Angeles is notoriously one of the most dangerous places in America, making it an unlikely hangout for a portrait painter. However, this is precisely where Edward Sutcliffe visited last July. As part of a winning *BP Travel Award* proposal, the West Midlands artist ventured to this tough neighbourhood to document the unlikely success of the Compton Cricket Club (CCC) – a team that formed 20 years ago to help combat the negative effects of poverty, homelessness and gang violence using the ideals of sportsmanship.

Founded in 1995, the CCC has played in the UK on four occasions and made headlines in 2011 as the first all American-born team to tour Australia. It was during this period that Edward heard about their adventures on

BBC Radio 4. “I immediately thought the club’s unique situation would make an impressive body of work,” he says. The 37-year-old approached CCC co-founder, Katy Haber, with his suggestion and, to his delight, she was bowled over. “There have been documentaries made about the club, but the painting angle was something different and she appreciated it,” he says.

Currently based in Dubai and with a portfolio of previous sitters that includes Labour MPs, Edward had little idea of what to expect when he landed in Los Angeles last summer. “My first impressions were that it was clearly a hardened place, although it doesn’t look like a slum. It looks like how you’d imagine any working-class city to look,” says the artist. “Katy and I made our way to one of the players’ houses to meet the whole team. We had a BBQ and a couple of beers, which was brilliant. I met a local lady in the liquor store and she was in complete shock to see a British guy in Compton. It was priceless.”

Edward arranged individual sittings with each of the players to sketch, photograph and get to know them on a personal level. Surreal as this experience was for the artist, the intimacy between sitter and painter came as a surprise to the players too. “They’ve had media coverage before, photoshoots for magazines and such like, but the painting element was new to them. They weren’t quite sure how it was going to work but they were all willing to take part,” he reveals. “A lot of them work long hours and I felt privileged that they could find time to tell me their stories. They were really welcoming and it was a joy. I’m excited to show them the finished pieces.”

Many of the players told of their harsh beginnings and how the etiquette of cricket has helped them stay out of trouble. However, vice captain Emidio Cazarez shared a particularly worrying incident that brought home to Edward the very real threat of violence in the neighbourhood.

In 2009, Emidio’s brother, Jesse, had been killed as an innocent bystander in a drive-by shooting. “He has previously found bullets while clearing out the guttering as well,” explains Edward. “Guns, drugs and gangs are much more prominent there than in Britain.”

The players all explained that conditions in Compton have improved in the past 20 years, even if the lure of a criminal life is still prevalent. Edward hopes his paintings convey the CCC’s sense of optimism.

“The narrative of the entire project is centred around these guys, each with amazing stories, who love cricket and have travelled around the world as a result,” he says. “I hold them in such high regard and I hope that comes across in the paintings.”

Edward is clearly proud that his seven portraits will go on display at the National Portrait Gallery this summer. It’s clear, however, that his real reward has been getting to know the remarkable men behind this remarkable story.

Edward’s work features in the *BP Portrait Award 2015* exhibition, which runs from 18 June to 20 September at National Portrait Gallery, London WC2. www.edwardsutcliffepaintings.com



LEFT *Reuben*, a biro and ink drawing from Edward’s sketchbook

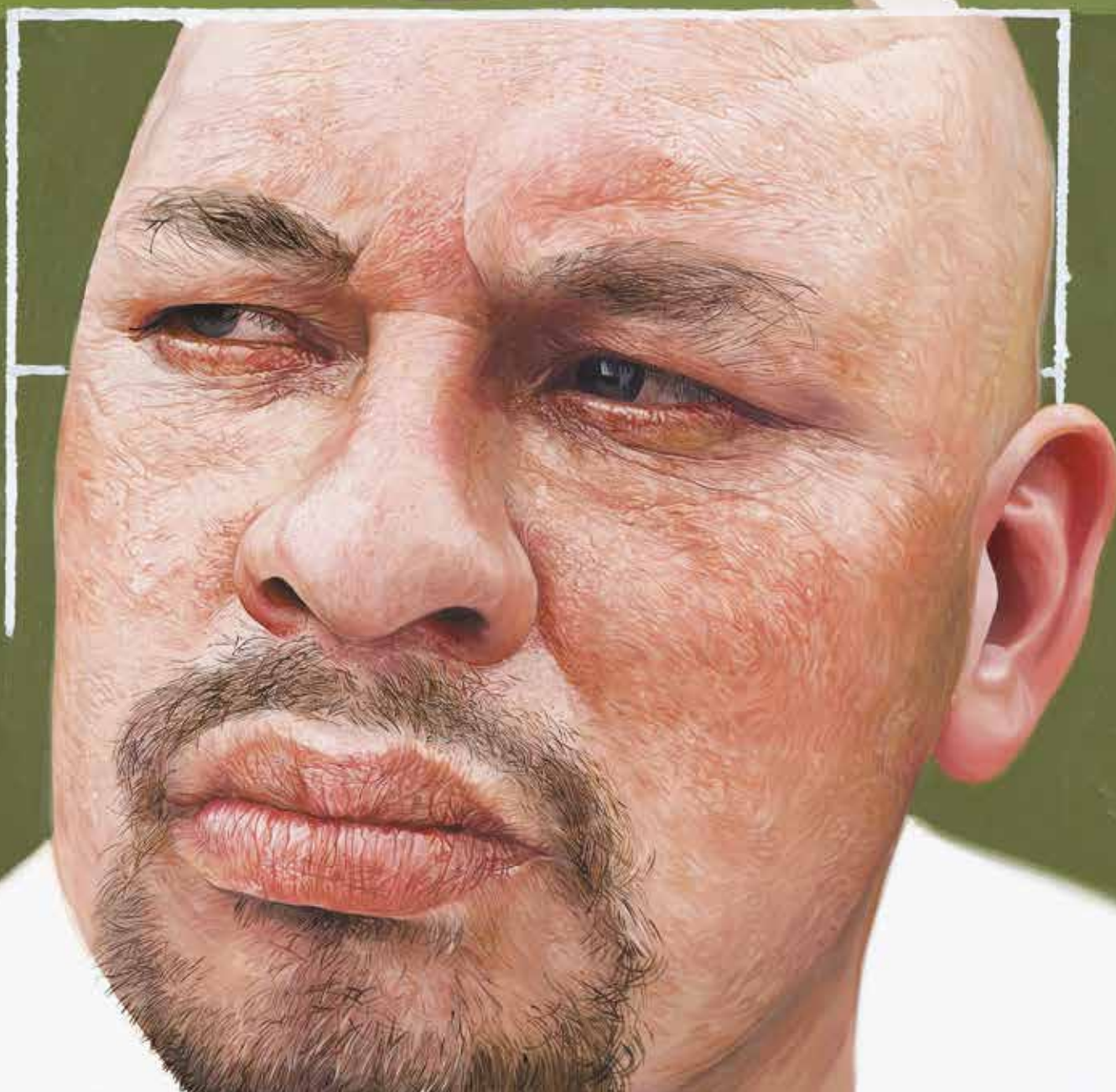
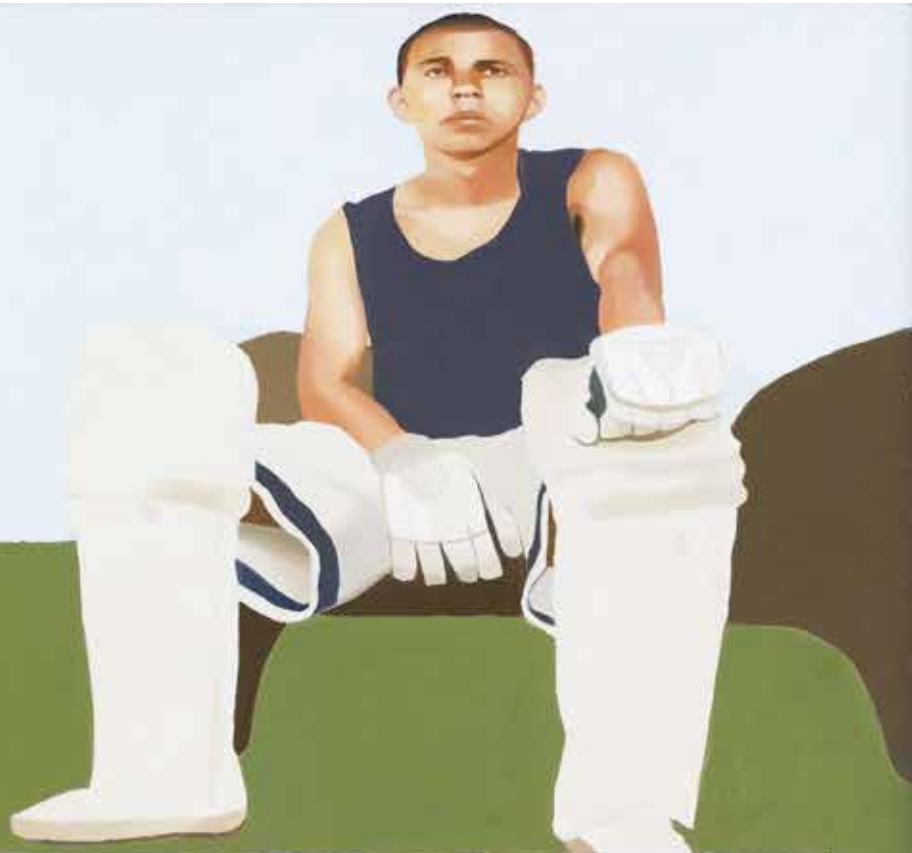
BELOW LEFT *Steve*, oil on canvas, 42x28cm

BELOW At home with the Cazarez family and Katy Haber (second from right)

OPPOSITE PAGE *Sergeo and Steve*, oil on canvas, 45x30cm



**"A LADY IN THE
LIQUOR STORE
WAS IN SHOCK
TO SEE A BRITISH
ARTIST IN
COMPTON...
HER REACTION
WAS PRICELESS"**

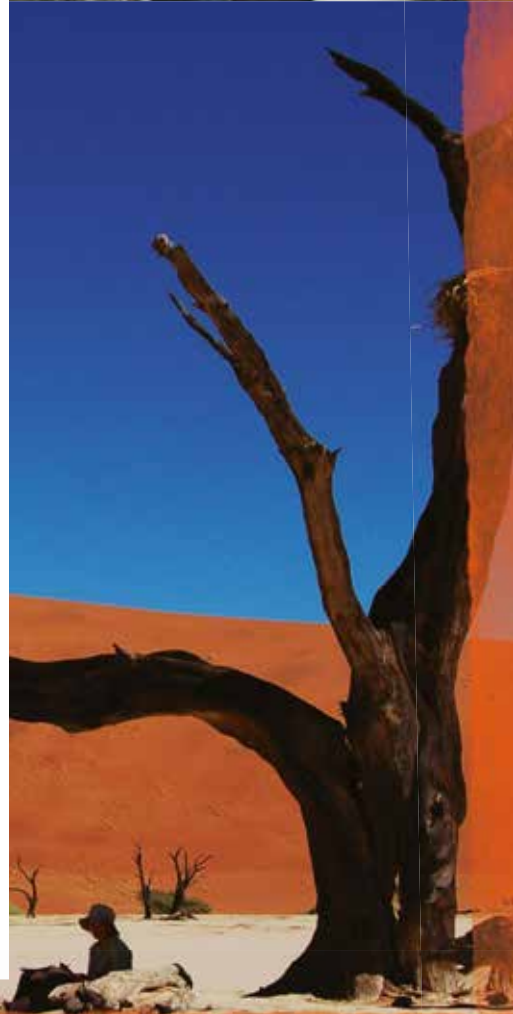
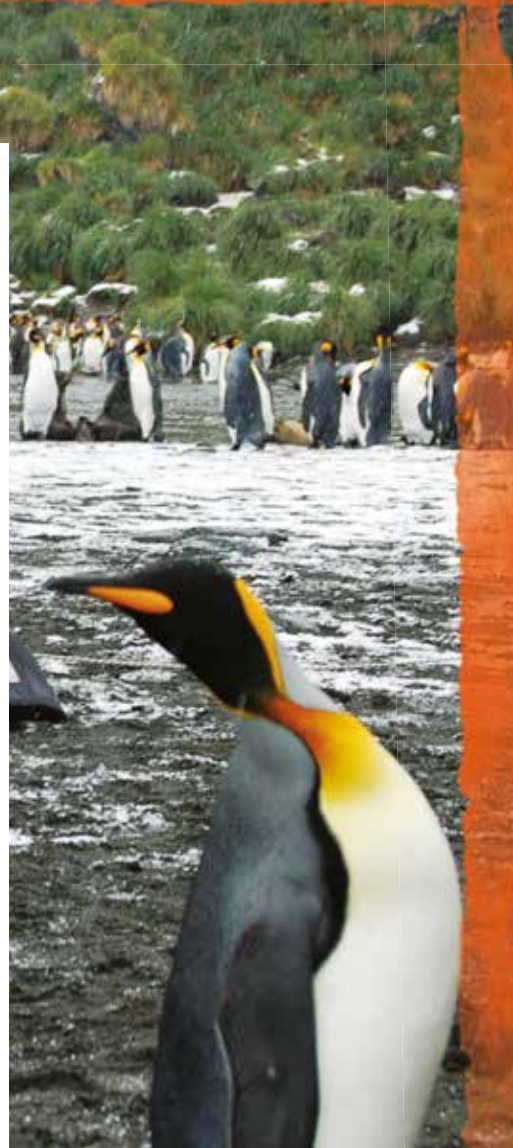




PACK YOUR BAGS

TEMPTED TO FOLLOW THE LEAD OF OUR ADVENTUROUS ARTISTS? ART SAFARI'S **MARY-ANNE BARTLETT** SHARES TIPS FOR A PERFECT GETAWAY

- Take artists' quality paper – compared to the cost of a flight, it's not expensive. If you are taking loose sheets, make a folder out of stiff corrugated plastic – it can double as a drawing board. Prefer a sketchbook? Choose stitched rather than wire-bound books as the pages don't smudge.
- Think carefully about the colours you may need before you go and refine your usual palette accordingly. The colours required for a trip to the Polar regions are very different to the paints you might take to the African bush.
- For an art holiday on the move, consider taking watercolour pans or even pencils, rather than conventional tubes. If you must take tubes, pack them in your hold luggage and wrap them well in case of any leakage.
- Collapsible water pots and water brushes (such as the Pentel Aquash Water Brush) are great space savers. Bring your good brushes in a tube for protection.
- Got a favourite penknife for sharpening pencils? Remember to pack it safely in your hold luggage – it is awful to have an 'old friend' confiscated at the airport.
- For carrying your art materials and camera on day excursions, take a light, waterproof bag – preferably a rucksack so your hands are free.
- A filter water bottle cuts down on waste and can be refilled on the go to keep you safely hydrated. Remember to carry a separate water bottle for your paint water too.
- To avoid excess baggage charges, check the luggage allowances on all your flights. Internal flights often allow a few kilograms less than international flights.
- Many of us travel with more than we really need. Gather everything together, spread it all out and try to reduce it by at least a third before you pack your bags. The trick of rolling rather than folding items of clothing helps too.
- Keep a sun hat, sunglasses and a high-factor sun cream with your art kit – sunburn can spoil your holiday and even cause lasting damage.



Quentin Blake LIFE UNDER WATER



A Hastings Celebration

JERWOOD GALLERY

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Quentin Blake, *Life Under Water – A Hastings Celebration*, 2015 © the artist.

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Sir Alfred Munnings (1878-1959) was a major figure in the great tradition of British horse painting, but his recording of English rural life in the first half of the 20th century is less well recognised. Immensely successful, yet controversial, he became the scourge of modern art in his position as President of the Royal Academy. Visitors to the Munnings Art Museum in his former home, Castle House, can explore the life and work of this prolific East Anglian artist.

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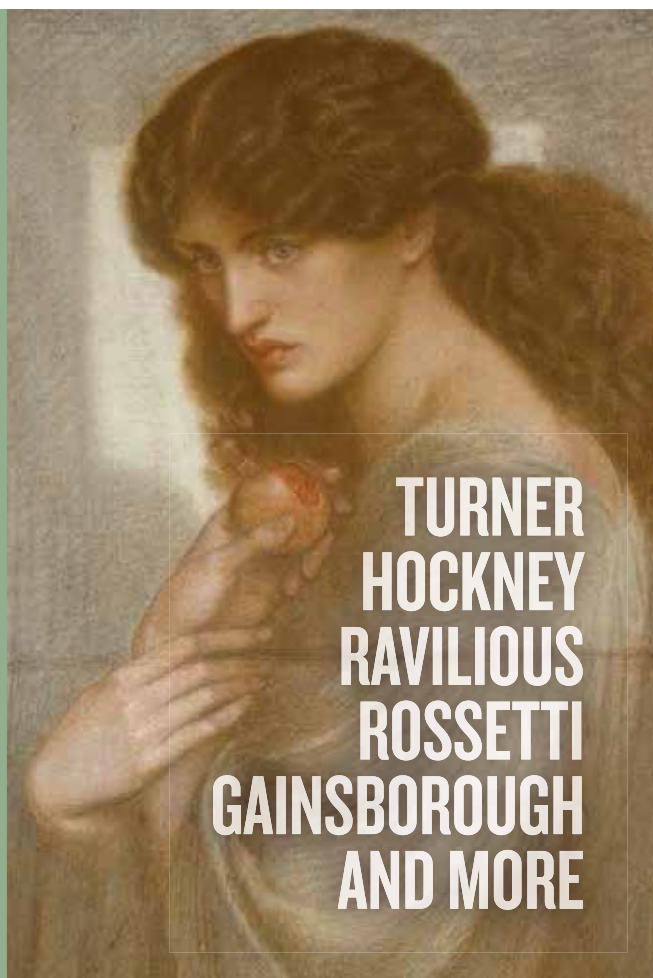
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DISHEARTENED WITH YOUR WORK?
STRUGGLING TO FIND MOTIVATION?
OUR COLUMNIST **LAURA BOSWELL**
HAS A FEW SIMPLE STRATEGIES TO
GET THE CREATIVE JUICES FLOWING

The first thing I do when faced with a slump in creativity is to have a look at my calendar and make a plan based on the type of events I have coming up and the kind of work they require.

It seems counterintuitive to try and generate creativity by a look at things commercially, but I find that I can often put myself in a more cheerful and creative frame of mind by thinking about the demands of my Open Studio events where I may need to concentrate on locally themed and affordable pieces or those of a new venue where something bold and experimental is required.

I frequently use a theme or set of ideas when I need to boost my imagination. That might be as simple as using a specific format or it may mean a new technical challenge. I find thinking of work in terms of several prints, rather than hopping from single idea to single idea, is an easier way of generating a flow of creativity and creating enthusiasm for new work. I also find working on a set of prints will encourage me to push my technique and follow through on new ideas. Sometimes a more formal approach can be really helpful and I will give myself a commission with set rules and deadlines. Then I will publicise the project wherever I can. There's nothing like making a plan public to motivate me to succeed.

Other times I will try and involve a specific product or supplier in the idea to give a more commercial twist along with some added pressure. So just now I am collaborating with a new supplier to use his pure mineral pigments on a set of local landscapes destined for a solo show later this year. I'm working in a traditional Japanese format that is new to me, playing on the popular Japanese woodblock theme of a set of landscape 'views' (in my case Buckinghamshire, not Mount Fuji). With these rules, a deadline and another party involved, I know I'll keep my motivation high and creativity flowing.

Laura's next exhibition, *Landscapes*, runs from 27 June to 19 July at Margate Gallery, Kent.
www.lauraboswell.co.uk



“
**THERE'S
NOTHING LIKE
MAKING A PLAN
PUBLIC TO
MOTIVATE ME**
”

ABOVE

Laura Boswell, *The Needles*
from *Alum Bay*, Japanese
woodblock print, 122x72cm

life

DRAWING

FOR HER LATEST PROJECT, **NINA COSFORD** HAS ILLUSTRATED THE BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS VIRGINIA WOOLF AND JANE AUSTEN. "IT'S ABOUT CELEBRATING CREATIVITY," SHE TELLS **TERRI EATON**





to an outsider looking in, the job of an illustrator is to doodle away the hours in a quaint little cottage, drinking 10 cups of tea with a cat in your lap.

"If only this were true," says illustrator Nina Cosford.

"Once I've finished fulfilling my role as contractor, negotiator, administrator, studio manager, accountant and licensor, only then do I get to draw."

Growing up in Surrey with a commercial artist father, Nina was given an early insight into what it would be like to make a living from illustration. She saw both the pressures of deadlines and also how rewarding a career it could be. The chance to follow in her dad's footsteps, via an illustration and animation degree at Kingston University, proved too tempting. "I had a doubtful phase in first year, but I decided to stick it out and I'm glad I did because I applied myself twice as much and put my whole heart into it," says Nina. "My dad was a massive inspiration and I do feel as though I've inherited his work ethic."

As such, the 26-year-old has a remarkably packed schedule. If she's not organising *HiFest*, an illustration festival in her native Hastings, she's busy adding more drawings to her successful *Girls Illustrated* venture – a personal response to the popular US TV series, *Girls*.

It was the latter project that brought Nina's work to the attention of Zena Alkayat. Author of guidebooks *Tea and Cake London* and *London Villages*, Zena was now working as a senior commissioning editor when she approached the Kingston University graduate to develop *Life Portraits*, a series of beautifully illustrated biographies. Launching in

May, the series celebrates remarkable women throughout history, starting with the authors Virginia Woolf and Jane Austen. Further volumes are planned on designer Coco Chanel in September and artist Frida Kahlo in 2016.

As a young, independent and aspiring creative herself, Nina fit the project like a glass slipper. "I feel as though I'm personally invested in it because I've had a lot of input from the start," she says. "I visited Charleston last year [home of Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group] and fell in love. I spoke to Zena about possibly creating something centred on the group as a whole, but then we decided to focus on Virginia Woolf and hinge it around this female icon, which we felt was a stronger perspective."

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE
Nina's illustrations for *Virginia Woolf*, part of the new *Life Portraits* series written by Zena Alkayat

THE *LIFE PORTRAITS* SERIES IS ABOUT
celebrating creativity
AND PERSEVERANCE, IT'S ABOUT CARVING YOUR OWN PATH
and challenging restrictions

OPPOSITE PAGE
Nina's illustrations
for *Jane Austen*
from new series,
Life Portraits

The pair had identified a real viable gap in the market for independent women who may find Woolf's tale relatable and appealing. Suitably impressed, Frances Lincoln commissioned a second volume on Jane Austen almost immediately after the initial meeting. It was a proud moment for the pair, though it meant Nina's workload had doubled overnight. "I had from July until October to complete both books," she explains. "Every single page was to be illustrated. It was a challenge and it meant I had to get into Virginia and Jane's worlds quickly. I became even more absorbed because of the pressure and I produce my best work in those conditions, even if it feels like a blessing and a curse at the time."

The two books tell the story of each author in insightful, bite-sized chunks of text, which act as a perfect primer for the uninitiated, while long-term admirers of their work will delight in the selection of choice quotes and wider historical context. When it came to illustrating the text, Nina thought it was important to capture the essence of the women and in her own unique style. She wanted to suggest what influenced and inspired the authors during their lifetimes, what circles they would have moved in, the

the show. She shared them via Twitter with hopes that the show's creator, Lena Dunham, would notice them in her newsfeed. "I knew from her social media presence that Lena was outward looking and supportive of creatives. She's really got her finger on the pulse. I was hoping she would see it and she did – then it got a bit crazy," admits Nina, who was commissioned by the TV channel HBO to illustrate the entire third series as well as create her own line of merchandise. "What started out as fan art in my studio grew into this huge opportunity."

This included the chance to meet the US-based Dunham when she invited Nina to her book launch in London. "I had all these things I wanted to say to her, but before I could say anything, she was telling me how much she loved my work. That was the greatest reward."

Nina loves to share her work with others, especially as illustration can be an isolated practice at times. Not content with sharing it online, she decided to reach out to her fellow creatives in person by organising the first annual Hastings illustration festival, *HiFest*, in 2014 with her illustrator boyfriend Ali Graham. The idea to host their own event was triggered by a select group of local artists who

Virginia Woolf and Jane Austen HAVE BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT A MILLIONS TIMES, but I don't think anyone has presented THEM IN THIS WAY BEFORE

objects that cluttered up their desks and what music they would have danced to – the informal yet interesting details.

"They've been written about a million times, but I don't think anyone has presented them in this way before. If I can help modernise the angle we look at these women throughout the series, then that's really exciting," she says. "Each had restrictions in their life, whether personally or socially, but they turned their battles into legacies."

The *Life Portraits* series explores details of Woolf's struggles with identity, Austen's enormous capacity for humanity, Chanel's incredible rise and Kahlo's strength of spirit. The books aren't intended to sugar-coat these stresses but rather to look at them in a contemporary context and to present them in a visually engaging, digestible format. "This isn't about a feminist viewpoint. It's about individualism and modernism, it's about celebrating creativity and perseverance, it's about carving your own path, finding your niche and challenging restrictions," she says, firmly. "That's a general role model and not just for women. It's universal."

Nina is a huge advocate of being the master of your own destiny, as her *Girls Illustrated* project demonstrates. The hugely popular collection of drawings, depicting scenes from the cult coming-of-age US TV show, began as a self-initiated project in 2013. Nina was temporarily out of work so she busied herself by sketching characters from

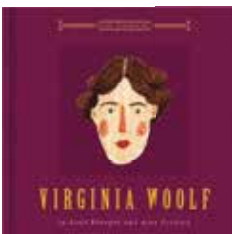
felt that more of a spotlight needed to be shone on the Sussex town – and Nina was just the lady to do it.

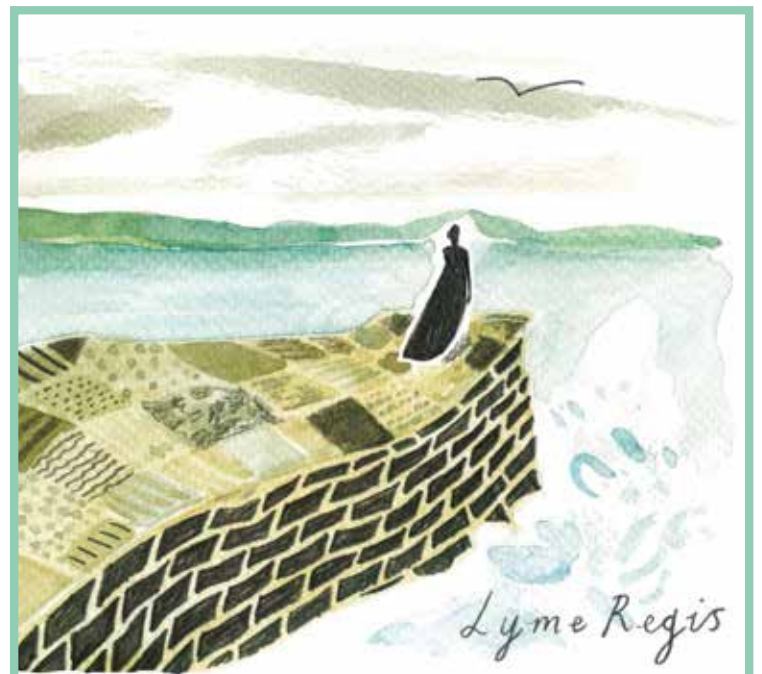
"It's a creative hub, especially for illustration, and we felt it needed unifying and celebrating. It was really hard work, but we've booked to do it all over again this year," she explains. "Our aim was to include everyone – students, kids, families, emerging illustrators, long-standing illustrators, collectives, graduates – and it was great to see this cross-section of people coming together."

Nina is pretty fearless when it comes to reaching out to her contacts, her friends and her local community to make things happen, not least in securing Sir Quentin Blake as a patron of the festival. "We owe him huge thanks for raising the publicity of the festival and for showing that we were serious about it," she says. "I've met Quentin a couple of times before so I was more composed meeting him at the festival than I was meeting Lena Dunham. I actually met him as a student and I got him to sign my battered copy of [Roald Dahl's 1966 Blake-illustrated book] *The Magic Finger*."

With plans for 2015's festival well underway and Coco Chanel's *Life Portrait* to illustrate before its release in September, Nina shows no signs of putting her feet up just yet. Putting pencil to paper is much more her style.

Nina and Zena's first two *Life Portraits* books, *Virginia Woolf* and *Jane Austen*, are published by Frances Lincoln, RRP £12 each.
www.ninacosford.com





A portrait of Michael Craig-Martin, an older man with white hair, wearing a dark jacket over a dark t-shirt. He is holding a large blue umbrella. The background is a solid pink color. The text 'WORDS OF WISDOM' is overlaid on the image.

WORDS OF WISDOM

MICHAEL CRAIG-MARTIN CBE IS ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL BRITISH ARTISTS OF HIS GENERATION. IN THIS EXTRACT FROM HIS NEW BOOK, THE 73-YEAR-OLD ROYAL ACADEMICIAN SHARES HIS THOUGHTS ON ART, LIFE AND LEARNING FROM YOUR MISTAKES

MICHAEL ON TAKING RISKS

I am in general a somewhat cautious person, but I have on occasion taken great, instinctive, even foolhardy risks, blind leaps of faith. Once I make such a decision to act, I cannot be talked out of it. In retrospect, each and every one was well worth the risk and made a lasting and positive impact on my life and circumstances.

...ON BEING VULNERABLE TO THE WORLD

There is nothing that happens in an artist's life – whether good or bad, no matter how dramatically important or apparently trivial – that cannot be turned to effective use in their art: any crummy part-time job, any minor incident, any childhood memory. Other people can read a book for pleasure or enlightenment. An artist may read a book and it can alter the whole course of their life's work. Artists are unusually vulnerable to the world in this way. And they, in turn, use their work to seduce others into valuing what they value.

...ON ADVICE FOR AN ASPIRING ARTIST

I would never advise anyone to become an artist. If you have another option, take it. Most people who end up as artists rarely feel they had an option.

...ON LINE DRAWING

Line drawing – drawing without shading, cross-hatching or chiaroscuro – permits and conveys the most precise sense of accuracy of any kind of drawing. The facts are laid bare; nothing can be fudged or obscured. Leonardo da Vinci used line drawing for his studies of everything from flying machines to the human nervous system.

The irony is that line drawing is less like the objects drawn than any other method of drawing. There are planes, shadows, colours in the things we observe, but no lines. There are no lines in nature, in the human body, in fabricated objects. The lines in drawing are an invention. Line drawing is the most complete artifice in art.

...ON LEARNING TO LEARN

I found that my job as a teacher was to help students locate and then develop whatever was truly theirs. It was clear that they arrived at art school highly formed in some ways, and surprisingly undeveloped in others. The purpose of art education is to resolve the latter while respecting the former. There are some things that you can learn effectively only through good teaching, but an essential part of education involves learning how to learn for oneself.

One learns most easily when there is something one needs to do. For instance, it is difficult to learn to use Photoshop comprehensively from scratch because there is

so much to take on board. However, if there is something specific one needs to know, it is surprisingly easy to master, and in doing so one gains an understanding of how to learn more. One starts to discover other things that are possible. In art nothing is wasted; there is no mistake that cannot be turned to use. One can learn to do good work only by making mistaken efforts and doing better next time.

...ON NOT NEEDING TO LIKE SOMETHING

Many people seem to believe that their opinion on whether they like or dislike a work of art constitutes a judgment on its quality. "I don't like it, therefore it's a bad work."

But there are works that I consider to be great masterpieces that hold little or no interest for me. On the other hand, there are some that I know to be distinctly minor, of little lasting importance, that I love nonetheless. My own personal feelings about the two have no impact on what I consider to be their relative quality.

...ON CONTROVERSY

I enjoy being provocative and controversial. I assume that some, maybe even many, people will categorically disagree with much of what I have to say. Because art goes to the heart of people's values and beliefs, it is one of our most emotionally loaded subjects. I have no qualms about being criticised or condemned for my views, so long as they actually are my views.

...ON SAVING THE BEST TO LAST

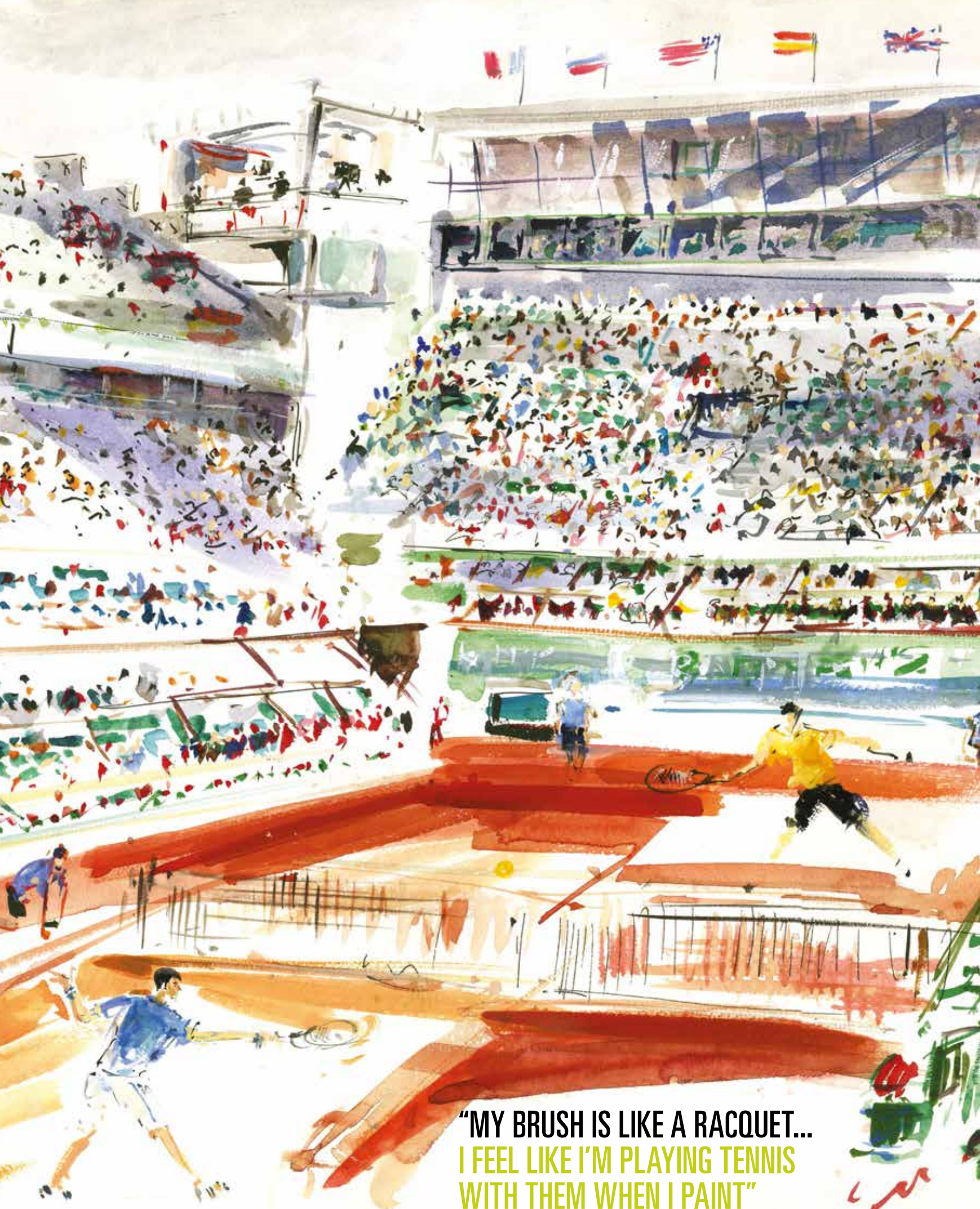
I am fortunate to have enjoyed varying degrees of success and recognition since my first show in 1969, but for many years my situation felt very proscribed, limited largely to Britain, and constrained by the requirements of teaching.

Over the past 25 years, however, I have enjoyed opportunities and freedoms of choice I did not know previously. Artists always claim that their latest work is their

best, often mistakenly, but I have to tell you, I really do. It is ironic that through teaching I am associated with the phenomenon of youthful and early success, but my personal experience feels more or less the opposite. I feel I have saved the best to last.

This is an extract from *On Being an Artist* (Art/Books, £22.50). www.artbookspublishing.co.uk

**"ARTISTS ARE
UNUSUALLY
VULNERABLE...
A GOOD BOOK
CAN ALTER
YOUR WHOLE
LIFE'S WORK"**



**"MY BRUSH IS LIKE A RACQUET...
I FEEL LIKE I'M PLAYING TENNIS
WITH THEM WHEN I PAINT"**

PAINT SET MATCH!

FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, PARISIAN ARTIST **JOËL BLANC** HAS BECOME A PERMANENT FIXTURE AT THE FRENCH OPEN. HE TELLS **NICK DINES** HOW HE CAPTURES THE ACTION IN WATERCOLOUR

When tennis ace Rafael Nadal targets an unprecedented 10th French Open title at Roland Garros this summer, Parisian watercolourist Joël Blanc will be courtside with the photographers, attempting to capture the same scenes in a volley of brushstrokes.

The iconic red clay courts are a mere topspin lob away from the 69-year-old artist's Paris studio and he has been making the brief pilgrimage to the French Open every year since 2004, after an invitation from local television station, France 2. The producers were impressed by his paintings of the World Athletics Championships and wanted him to cover the action in a similar fashion.

Once settled in Box B17 on show court Philippe-Chatrier, Joël captures the full vibrancy of the grand slam, from the players gliding effortlessly over the clay to the spectators speckled like confetti in the background.

So while the world's press photographers can digitally capture every exhausting rally, Joël believes he has the real advantage. "My brush is like a racquet and I feel like I'm playing with them when I paint," he says. "I have a real connection with my brush, like a violinist playing Paganini."

Born in Toulon in 1946, Joël studied at the École des Beaux Arts, before honing his talent for capturing movement while drawing on the streets of Mexico, Cuba, India and more. Joël is an admirer of Diego Velázquez and the American artist Thomas Eakins for their respective ability to portray figures in motion, and he believes that the key to depicting such movement is an accurate illustration of the proportions of the human body. "I've studied anatomy over many years. I don't need to look in a book to understand the muscles and the body. I would always advise studying anatomy when it is still not moving. Once you understand how to achieve correct proportions in a still figure, then you can adapt your eyes to the movement."

Joël's advice for artists attempting to capture movement is to continuously draw hundreds of sketches, as success in this field requires practice. Early on in his career, he spent time painting racehorses and then turned his attention to a series of sports, including cycling, rugby, sailing, and, of course, tennis.



TOP RIGHT Joël paints Marion Bartoli in the second round of the French Open 2013
RIGHT Serena Williams from the 2013 semi-finals
LEFT Novak Djokovic in action at last year's Open



**“WATERCOLOUR
IS WONDERFUL
BECAUSE YOU
CAN SUGGEST
COLOUR, FORM
AND MOVEMENT
IN ONE TOUCH”**

When the 2015 French Open gets underway on 19 May, it will mark Joël's twelfth year at Roland Garros, during which time he has become a familiar sight. “It's like Wimbledon, a magnificent place where all the great players perform, fuelled by emotion. I appreciate their skill very much and when you are close enough to see their facial expression, there's a lot of emotion to be captured.”

Having observed many a thrilling duel, Joël likes to explore a fresh point of view with each new tennis painting. “I generally begin with the crowd, as come the end I will know I have the space where I will position the players. During the match I'll often take a fresh sheet of watercolour paper and just work with speed, concentrating on one player and their actions across several different movements without the landscape. Watercolour is wonderful because you can suggest colour, form and movement in one touch.”

Always sure of what he wishes to portray before his brush touches the paper, he nevertheless thrives on the unpredictability of the sport. “I see that ability to depict the instant as a great challenge. I try to capture those different expressions in that moment, sometimes with the arms, legs, or the entire body.”

Given his quick, vigorous approach, members of the crowd are often side-tracked by the off-court talent on display. “Sometimes spectators have said they were watching me paint more than [they were] watching the players,” jokes Joël.

It hasn't prevented many of the greats of the game, including John McEnroe, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer, becoming advocates and even collectors of his work. In fact, appreciation of Joël's watercolours even extends to a royal seal of approval from Prince Albert of Monaco, after the artist showcased his work on court at the Davis Cup in Monte Carlo.

Ultimately it's the players who are the stars in his works and Nadal remains one of Joël's personal favourite subjects. “Rafael is very kind, yet on the court he's a lion, an extraordinary character. I remember touching his back to embrace him and it was hard like stone, so I aim to show this in the paintings.”

After more than a decade observing them on court, Joël has become familiar with the different players' individual characteristics. “Federer tends to be very quiet, yet elegant, while [former French number one] Gaël Monfils demonstrates situations which are unthinkable, forever jumping like a puppet,” he explains. “Then there's Serena Williams, amazing – a sculpture of a woman playing tennis. It was like watching David and Goliath when she played China's Li Na. However, that's the beauty of tennis: each player is very interesting in their own way and I have to feel these characteristics.”

After wowing visitors to his *Horses and Tennis* exhibition at Sofitel London St James last summer, Joël is open to one day swapping clay for grass and capturing the action at Wimbledon. For now though, he remains content in his familiar Parisian surroundings, with one of the best seats in the house.

www.joelblanc.com

LEFT AND BELOW
Sketches of Roger Federer from last year's French Open
INSET Joël's view from centre court





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IN THE STUDIO WITH

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AS THE SOCIETY OF WOMEN ARTISTS READIES FOR ITS ANNUAL EXHIBITION, THE PRESIDENT WELCOMES US INTO HER SURREY STUDIO.

WORDS AND PHOTOS: STEVE PILL

How long have you been in this studio?

We moved here in 2008. I used to paint in a large, converted barn in the old house, but in a lot of respects this studio is better. I've got constant light from the top.

Is changeable natural light necessarily a good thing?

Oh yes, light is very important. I paint during the day, often lunchtimes or late afternoons and then again in the evening. It isn't until you look again at a picture in daylight that you can see what it needs. I'm always correcting things.

Do you have certain materials that you swear by?

I'm a member of the Pastel Society in France and I love drawing with pastels. For many years, I would make paintings in acrylic or oil and add a pastel mark because I love the softness. I've used pastel in some of these paintings in the studio now – I can't say where because I'm a very spontaneous painter. I've learned from experience that the spontaneous things I do are much more exciting.

Do you have to apply the pastel quite thinly?

No, I slap it on! I'm a very heavy-handed person. Sometimes I really work into the paint with the pastel. I painted women in ballet outfits and I used a lot of black pastel for shading. I needed to use four or five coats of spray after that.

You paint on a fantastic and rather decorative easel.

Where did you get it?

My husband bought it for me. There was a gallery in Bristol that was closing down and he asked if he could buy it. Isn't it gorgeous? We've even used it for weddings. When our two sons got married, we put the table menus on it.

What are you like in the studio?

If I come in here to play with a painting then that will be the day gone – I'll be in here for hours and I'll forget to make dinner. I get totally into "the zone", as they call it. I'll get covered in paint, on my nose, on my clothes. I'm totally into it. I don't do it for therapy either – this isn't a hobby. Some people say it's good therapy but being an artist can be one of the most stressful jobs going.

You have a pile of art books on the shelf. Do you have a favourite you could recommend?

No, not one single one. I need to talk to somebody and

have something shown to me. I think art books are brilliant, don't get me wrong, but I'm not very good with theory. I prefer to just paint and learn in the studio.

You studied with the artist Ken Paine. Did you pick up any tips from him about working in a studio?

As far as Ken is concerned, the world is his studio. I can remember the first time I went to see him – my painting changed over night. It was immediate. I was ready to soak up something new. I understood what he was doing because he was painting a passion.

Historically, there has been a campaigning element to the Society of Women Artists, celebrating female painters because other institutions are maybe neglecting them...

Funnily enough I don't see it like that, otherwise I would never have become president. The Society of Women Artists was established in 1855 because in those days people said women can't paint, so they'd send in work [to other exhibitions] under a pseudonym.

As president in 2015, I like to think we are a modern-day tradition. We all like equal pay and we like to be heard, but none of us are feminists. What our illustrious predecessors did was brilliant when you think of what the situation was like then. But if we accepted men today, it wouldn't be the same.

What about if a male artist entered under a pseudonym?

I'd love to have Grayson Perry but I think he might be a bit upset. I think he's brilliant.

If he submitted a work, would you accept it?

No. Well, not knowingly. I think we'd all be in trouble.

What are your plans for the society going forward?

I like to think that since I have taken over the presidency, the members have become stronger in showing what they can really do. The competition now is quite high and over the last three years we've been encouraging and getting very good submissions from non-members. I think we had maybe nine or 11 new members last year. A lot of the work is very contemporary but it has substance.

The Society of Women Artists' 154th Annual Exhibition 2015 runs from 5-13 June at Mall Galleries, London SW1.
www.society-women-artists.org.uk



THE SUNDAY TIMES
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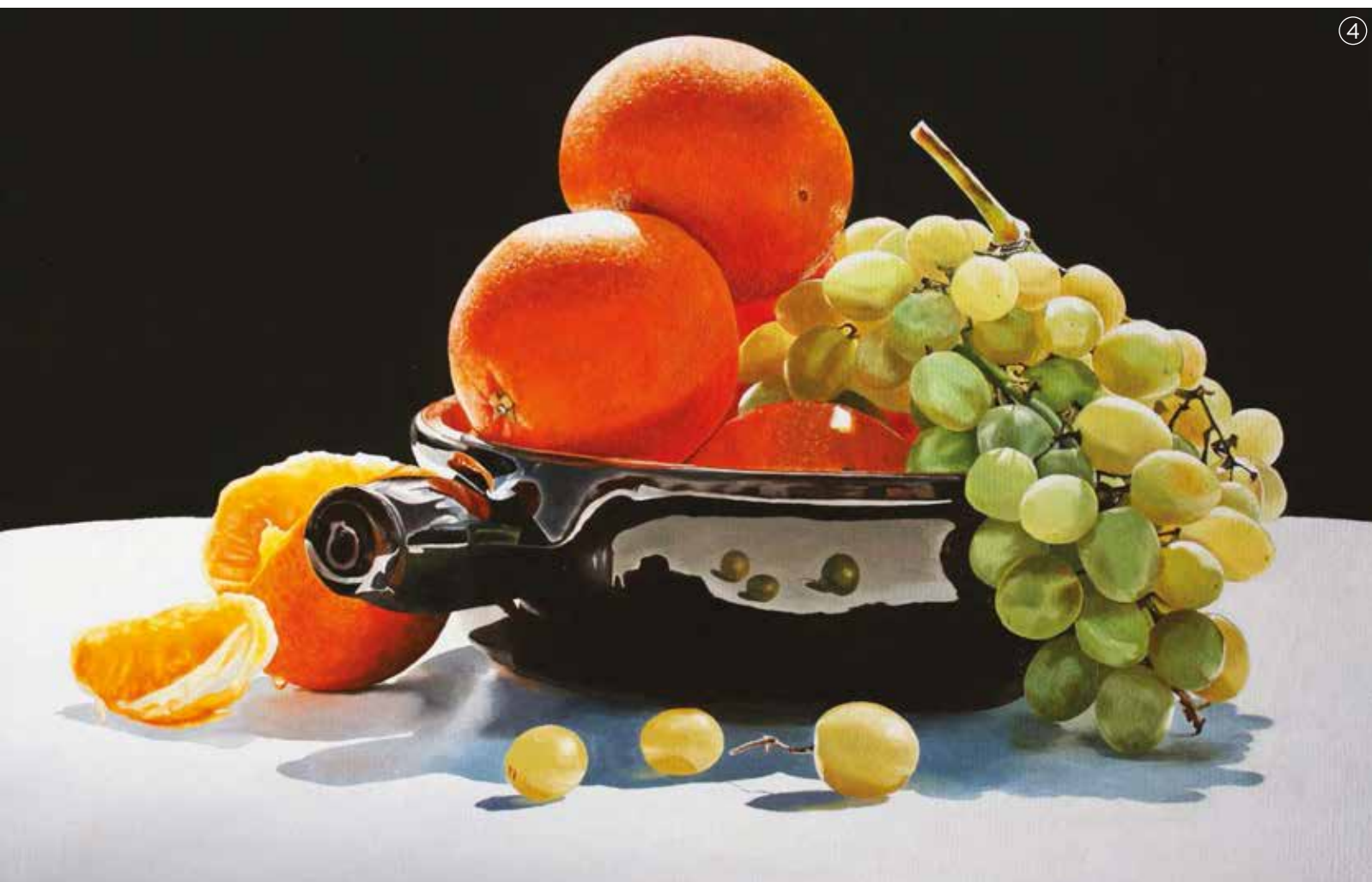


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3. Adrian Homersham, *Walking Through the Copse, Gatley Hill*. www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/adrianhomersham •



4. Jackie Ward, *Five a Day*. www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/jackiewardart • 5. Mary Stubberfield, *Printemps en Nice*. www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/mary-stubberfield • 6. Nicola McLean, *Soulful*. www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/nicseARTh



TALKING TECHNIQUES

YARA DAMIAN

A FORMAL TRAINING IN MADRID AND THE BRIGHT SUNSHINE OF THE CANARY ISLANDS HAS SHAPED THE PAINTERLY BRUSHWORK AND SHARP TONAL CONTRASTS OF THIS SPANISH ARTIST'S IMPRESSIVE PORTFOLIO, AS **STEVE PILL** DISCOVERS



ABOVE *Terraza con Vistas*, oil on panel, 35x54cm

RIGHT Yara at home in her studio

The Canary Islands is a place of contrasts. For most Britons, the area is synonymous with white beaches and package holidays, yet up in the volcanic mountainous regions, the gulf-stream climate results in a sprawl of lush vegetation across the many dramatic rock formations. Likewise, while the islands remain a Spanish outpost, they are in fact just 100 kilometres from the Moroccan coastline and the Western Sahara.

Nowhere is this split personality better explored than in the work of Yara Damian. In 2010, the Madrid-born artist moved to Gran Canaria, the third largest of the Canary Islands, and she has since built up an impressive portfolio of paintings that explore the full range of life on the islands. Yara's landscapes include pastel pink Atlantic skies, windswept Fuerteventura resorts and the soft ochre foothills of the volcanic mountains, while her portraits range from children playing on bright sandy beaches to the *Introspection* series of more atmospheric self-portraits.

The one unifying element to these varied subjects is the Spanish artist's use of dramatic *chiaroscuro*. In a painting such as *Terraza con Vistas*, the sensation of bright sunshine is created by the sharp shifts between the bright white walls and the rich black interiors. It suggests a very formal arrangement of tones, but Yara insists her approach is far more instinctive. "I don't plan them beforehand," she says. "I prefer trying to just see what happens when I put the different hues or tones together. Every effect comes from the relationship between each element."

"My advice for other artists would be to work on all of the parts of the painting at the same time, including the figures and the background, so you can see the relationships between all of the colours develop together."

That ability to balance a painting in this way has been honed across years of academic training and dedication >





“IT’S EASIER TO MAINTAIN A
BALANCE OF TONES,
WHEN YOU MIX ALL THE OTHER
COLOURS YOU NEED”

ABOVE *Aquí Me Quedo*, oil on linen, 73x92cm

to her craft. Yara’s path to becoming a full-time artist began at school when she would spend her lessons drawing all over her maths and science books. Rather than reprimand her, the artist’s mother was happy to encourage this creative side and took her daughter to a local artist’s studio after school each week to learn basic skills.

Having enjoyed the taste of studio life, Yara was determined to pursue painting as a career and enrolled on a BA in Fine Art at the Complutense University of Madrid. She credits José Sánchez-Carralero, the head of the landscape painting department, with igniting her passion for the genre. “He taught in a way that gave us freedom yet was based in a formal style – not in terms of realism, but just getting the structure down and the right hues.”

The course also offered plenty of opportunities to work from life and study the anatomy, but Yara would also spend many afternoons at the Circulo de Bellas Artes, a huge

multi-disciplinary arts venue in the city centre that had life models available to paint or draw every day. “I could go there and work totally by myself,” she explains. “There weren’t any teachers, just me, my material and the easels. It was very useful for me to realise the importance of working without instruction, because the real work of an artist is done alone.”

Like countless Madrid art students before her, part of Yara’s self-motivated education involved regular visits to the Museo del Prado, home to one of the world’s finest collections of European master paintings. She admired in particular the work of Joaquín Sorolla “for his huge skill and the use of light and colours” in paintings such as 1909’s *Boys on the Beach*, a composition that is echoed in several of her own oil studies of children playing in the sand. Other Spanish influences include the legendary Diego Velázquez and the lesser-known 20th-century landscape painter

Cirilo Martínez Novillo, whose atmospheric beach scenes often drifted into almost semi-abstracted fields of colour.

The latter is a technique that Yara has adopted and adapted to impressive effect in paintings like *Me Miro ¿Tú Me Ves?*, a dual self-portrait in which both the artist's dress and the curtains she is stood beside are merely suggested by large blocks of interesting painterly textures.

As a result, the viewer's eye is drawn to the faces and also left to pick through the vast swathes of colour, which adds a layer of intrigue to the painting. Yara believes that simplifying a potential composition and focusing on a particular area is a useful exercise for artists to attempt. "It's important to discriminate, because you can't truly express yourself if you try to represent everything you see."

Much of the interest in these abstracted areas is created by the subtle variations of colour and texture within a

seemingly coherent passage of painting. Yara applies Winsor & Newton Artists' Oil Colours using an array of palette knives and synthetic brushes, the latter chosen for their ability to retain liquids and create softer strokes.

Although her favoured palette includes a few less obvious colours such as Cerulean Blue or Permanent Carmine, she nevertheless sticks to a limited selection of tube pigments. "It's easier to maintain a balance of tones when you mix all the other colours you need," she explains, although this can lead to an over-reliance on her favourite violet and blue shades. "When I look back at my portfolio, I often think that I have painted with these colours too much, so I will try to choose other ones for my new works."

Yara admits that each new painting will begin not only with a preconceived idea about the composition and the tones but also with an overall objective for what she wants >



ABOVE *Emociones II*,
oil on linen,
22x27cm

LEFT *Arena Mojada*,
oil on linen,
50x61cm



“TRY TO WORK ON ALL PARTS OF A PAINTING
AT THE SAME TIME, SO YOU CAN SEE
THE RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN THE COLOURS DEVELOP TOGETHER”

to achieve on this particular canvas. A preliminary sketch is sometimes made, but Yara is keen to avoid establishing a routine for every painting that she makes. “I like to experiment in the sessions,” she says. “I feel that the painting is alive and it is my job to try and obtain a result from the freedom that the canvas provides. I think what my paintings express is the consequence of that freedom.”

The one exception to that self-imposed rule comes when she receives a portrait commission. “I work with less freedom in these commissions,” she says. “I make some studies before and I design the composition, tone and colours almost without any change from that initial idea.”

To break up the rigorously planned nature of these commissions, Yara uses a palette knife to score lines and scrape blocks of colour across a likeness to break up the picture plane. Doing so helps to link together otherwise disparate parts of the canvas.

In portraiture, Yara cites several contemporary artists whose work she admires, including South Korea’s Zin Lim

and the American painters Jeremy Lipking and Jeremy Mann. “His portraits and cityscapes are fresh, free and at the same time full of accuracy,” she says of the latter.

In recent years, Yara has begun teaching and will host her first painting holiday for Arte Umbria in 2016. The prospect of teaching has given her the chance to really think about her artistic philosophy. “The important points I like to focus upon are composition, the sensation of the light that you are seeing and how to translate through the tones. This includes not only establishing the values of contrast to obtain depth and the rhythm of brushstrokes to translate the textures of the landscape, but also looking at the overall organisation of the huge amount of information provided within a landscape view.”

Above all, there is one far simpler piece of advice she received as a student and to which she continues to return: “Work and have confidence in your work”. It is a philosophy that has served this promising painter very well so far.

www.yaradamian.com

ABOVE *Me Miro*
¿Tú Me Ves?, oil on
linen, 97x97cm

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Still life with boats, St Ives, 1950, Christopher Wood

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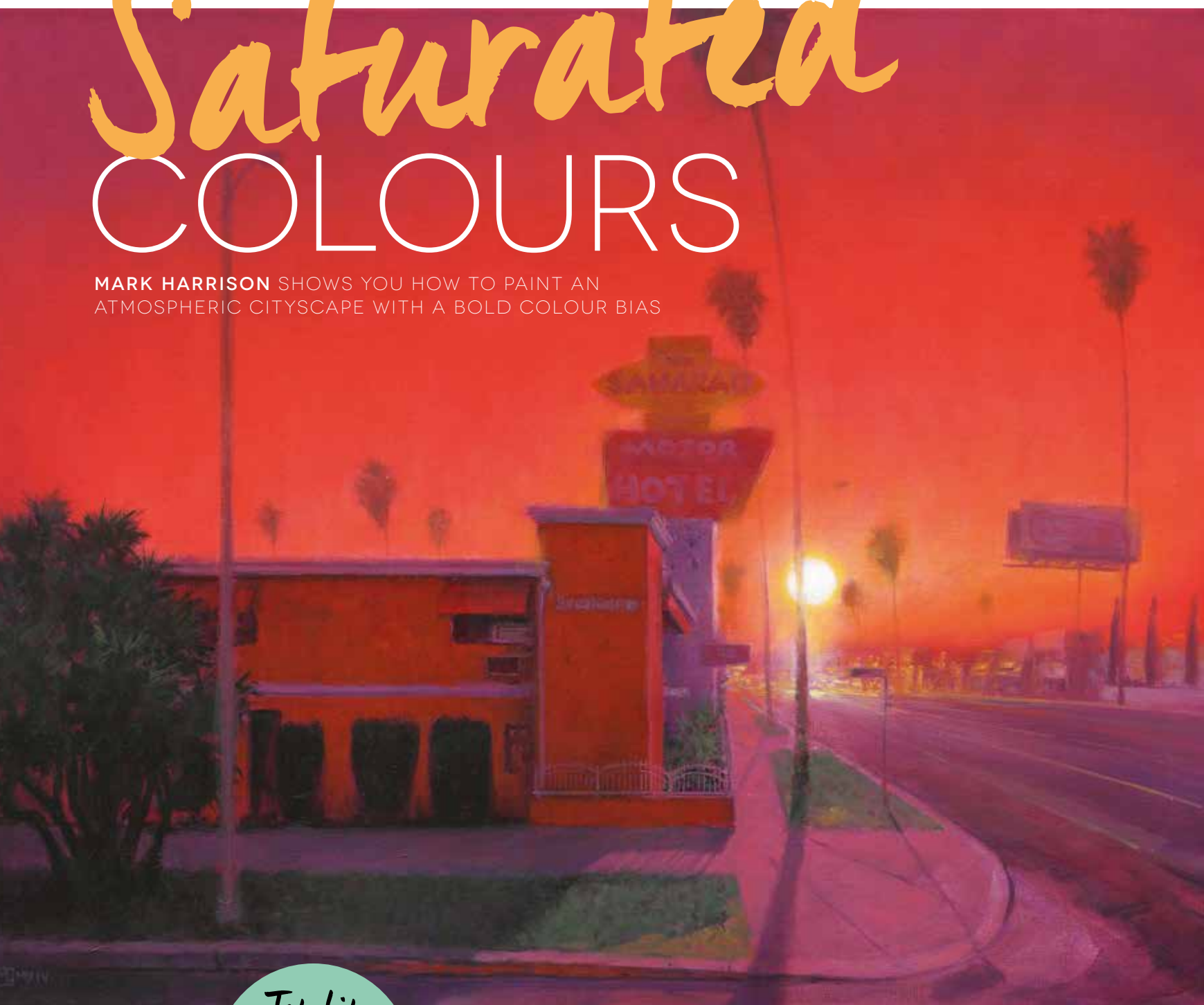
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For this painting of the Saharan Motel on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles, I wanted to create a picture that contained as much saturated colour as possible. It is often advised to set a high saturation colour against related neutrals so that it 'sings', but here I chose to limit those neutrals to create a rich, atmospheric mood. The resulting painting is as much about the colour red as it is about the location itself.

Every colour I used was either red-biased or mixed with a red to create a sense of

harmony in what is essentially a tonal painting. To finish, a thin glaze of Manganese Violet was painted over sky area to create a vignette effect, so that the sun looked brighter in comparison and the red sky appeared even more intense.

Always try to identify the relative transparency and opacity of your chosen colours. The transparency of Quinacridone Red was vital for achieving the intensity of red that I wanted in the sky's early washes. www.paintingsbymarkharrison.com



1 I began by roughly drawing my composition using an old size 2 brush and a mix of Burnt Sienna and Dioxazine Violet that was thinned with Liquin and turps.

2 Using the same Burnt Sienna and Dioxazine Violet mix, I applied a rough tonal under-painting with a rag and brush. I did this roughly as I was more interested in establishing the basic shapes at this stage. A thin wash of Quinacridone Red thinned with Liquin and turps was applied to the sky.

3 A further layer of the same colours was applied with a rag and then I positioned the sun with Titanium White. I now had a finished tonal under-painting that showed me how the basic composition would work.

4 Using a Burnt Sienna and Dioxazine Violet mix, I started to define the shapes of the motel and road. I wanted the sky colour to be as rich as possible, so I added

another wash of Quinacridone Red and would repeat this process at each stage.

5 I painted the walls of the motel with a Manganese Violet and Scheveningen Red Light mix and also used Manganese Violet and Naples Yellow for the motel sign. A mix of Dioxazine Violet and Oxide of Chromium was used to sketch in green trees and grass.

6 I added another glaze of Quinacridone Red to the sky and painted a thinned mix of Zinc White and Permanent Orange on the pavement, leaving the under-painting showing where the shadows would be.

7 A further glaze of Quinacridone Red was added to the sky to build up the intensity of the sunset. I defined the motel further using Manganese Violet and Scheveningen Red Light. A mix of Dioxazine Purple and Permanent Sap Green was used for the green areas in shadow. I also shortened the

lamppost on the left, as I wasn't happy with it breaking the top edge of the composition.

8 After applying another glaze on the sky, I painted the hotel sign, keeping it subtle as it was basically in silhouette. I applied a thin layer of Brilliant Pink to the sunlit pavement, and a mix of Oxide Of Chromium and Cadmium Orange for the grass.

9 I warmed up the sky around the sun with a thin wash of Cadmium Orange and some Winsor Yellow strokes around the edge. I loosely painted the right-hand side of the road with various reds, oranges, yellows and violets – avoiding detail helped this area to recede into the background. I then finished off the details on the motel building.

Holt Festival

Art Prize 2015

The winning entry will receive £1,500 and be exhibited at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Art

Entry is open to all artists to submit up to three wall-based pieces no larger than 1.25 metres on the longest side

Deadline Midnight Sunday 28th June 2015

Entry fee per piece: £10 x 1 £18 x 2 £25 x 3


An exhibition of 20-30 shortlisted works will be held at the

Auden Theatre, Holt, North Norfolk from **Sunday 19th July until Sunday 27th July** as part of Holt Festival 2015

The winner will be announced at the Private View on Sunday 19th July by the panel of three judges
Amanda Geitner, Colin Self and Nic Tyler

For further details and an application form visit **www.holtfestival.org**

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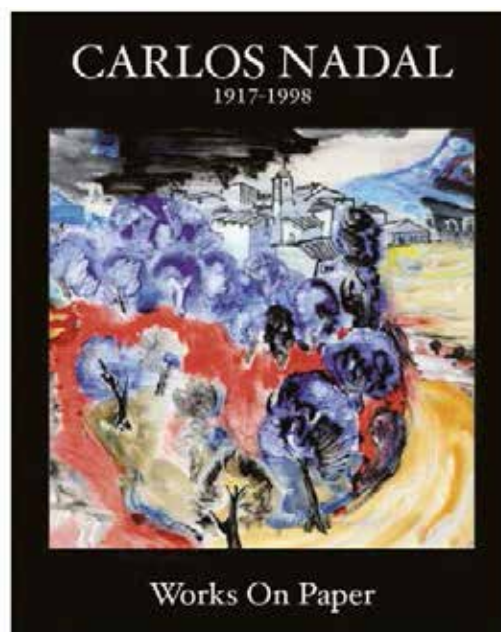


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.....and it happens every year on the last weekend in June!

TEXT: John Duncalfe and Dr Hilary Diaper, foreword by Alexandre Nadal
'Works on Paper' shows many of Nadal's preparatory oeuvre, many executed 'en plein air' with updated chronology and exhibition information from the Nadal archive and the authors.

This new publication follows the most successful 2010 book, 'Nadal An English Perspective'

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FABRICS

TALENTED FIGURATIVE ARTIST **ROXANA HALLS** SHARES HER SIX RULES FOR SUCCESS

1 ESTABLISH A TONAL RANGE

I work upon a mid-grey or fawn-coloured ground: this will generally be at the approximate midpoint of my tonal range. I will often allow areas of this ground to show through later layers of paint to enhance the suggestion of texture and depth, such as when painting fur, whereas with a heavy satin I would use no under-painting so that its density is more pronounced.

2 DON'T OVERTHINK THE TASK IN HAND

While it is invaluable to maintain a keen awareness of the unique weight and feel of a fabric's specific qualities, too much self-consciousness can prove inhibiting when you paint. For example, if I were to approach a diaphanous fabric thinking that it was really complicated, it would have a detrimental effect on how I executed the task.

3 SIMPLIFY YOUR SUBJECT

A fabric can generally be broken down into four or five distinct tonal and colour shifts. I paint most fabrics in three main layers, then scumble over these in small areas with thin, dry paint of a slightly contrasting hue to suggest the reflection of light or adjacent colours upon the surface. The print or pattern can then be added at the final stage.

4 BUILD IN BLOCKS

I begin by blocking in the basic forms from the darkest areas to the lighter ones. The initial layer

is always slightly darker than the second and the sense of texture grows as I work upon this, edging up towards the brightest highlights where the painting suddenly comes to life – for example, with the sheen on silk or leather or the gleam of metallic embroidery.

5 CHOOSE A BIGGER BRUSH

I always use a slightly larger brush than seems appropriate to maintain a sensuous fluency, rather than become over-fastidious. Even when painting details, I use a much fatter brush than might seem prudent. It is crucial to use the side of the brush, edging the paint into each fold of fabric, feeling the form as you build. Working this way means that you have no hard lines to interrupt the flow and blending occurs as you apply.

6 LOOK TO THE MASTERS

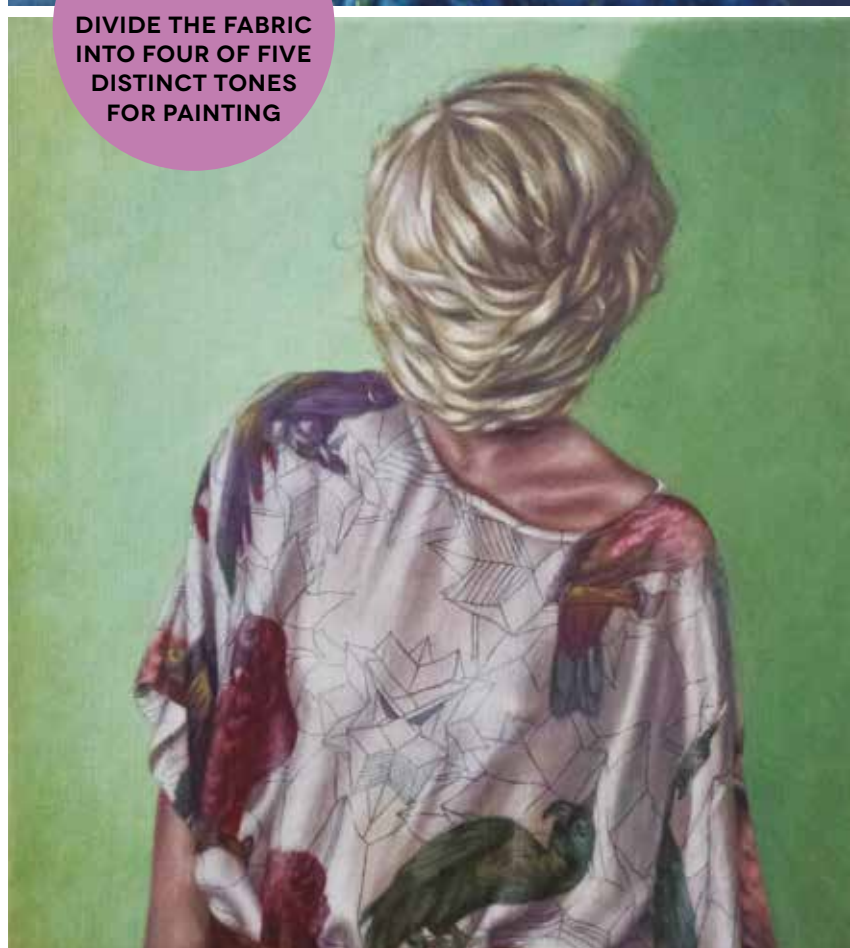
As a largely self-taught artist, I spent much of my early twenties looking to the masters in the National Gallery's permanent collection as my tutors. The one piece that has given me the most invaluable training is Diego Velázquez's *Philip IV of Spain in Brown and Silver*. I have spent countless hours before it, always thrilled by how, when standing close to the canvas then slowly moving away, those bold and gestural marks merge into such astonishing verisimilitude.


Roxana's next exhibition, *Unknown Women*, runs from 5-30 May at Hayhill Gallery, London W1. www.roxanahalls.com



TIP

DIVIDE THE FABRIC INTO FOUR OF FIVE DISTINCT TONES FOR PAINTING





“
TAKING PART IN
AN ART TRAIL WAS
ONE OF MY BEST
CAREER MOVES
”

A WELL-TRODDEN PATH

GOT THE TALENT BUT DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET NOTICED? TAKING PART IN AN ART TRAIL CAN BUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE AND POINT YOU IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, AS TRAIL CO-ORDINATOR **LAURA RICH** EXPLAINS. ILLUSTRATION: **RUBY TAYLOR**

This year I have taken on the enormous challenge of coordinating the Wylde Valley Art Trail. Now in its 15th year, the trail is Wiltshire's largest festival of visual arts. I have big shoes to fill, taking over from the previous coordinator and founder Nick Andrew.

I volunteered as a member of the team in 2009 and very quickly began to see the benefit of being involved in such an event. Taking part in the art trail has been one of the best career moves I made. Here are a few of the reasons why...

1. FRESH PERSPECTIVES

If, like me, you are lucky enough to be surrounded by supportive family and friends, sometimes it's hard to know whether you are gaining an impartial view of your work. Art trails attract all kinds of visitors including experienced collectors and lots of other artists. Not only are they a great way of gaining a new audience and networking, but you will also get appropriate feedback on your work.

People will 'vote with their feet' and many will give you constructive criticism. This can be tough to start with – not everybody will love what you do – but for the ones who are enthusiastic and ask questions about your techniques, feel the need to touch a surface, examine your work really closely or (best of all) buy your work, they make it worth putting yourself 'out there' and will help you gain confidence.

2. GAINING EXPERIENCE

If your ultimate goal is to get your work into a gallery, it's a really good idea to start building a CV of exhibitions and an art trail is a good place to start. I've learnt that, in order to sell your work, one very important skill to learn is how to talk about it. Whether you speak directly to a buyer or to a gallery to sell it on your behalf, you need to be able to convey your passion for your subject or tell the story behind it. One could argue that your work should speak for itself (and it should) but, in my experience, buyers like to know the backstory. One of the reasons that the public visits open studios and art trails is to find out about you.

Renowned furniture maker Matthew Burt says: "We have a saying that there is absolutely no point toiling in a Wiltshire workshop making beautiful things if no one ever sees them. An art trail answers that dilemma, giving us the wonderful

opportunity to show and talk to visitors about our designs and processes. However long one has been in practice, and we've been working for over 35 years, there is nothing better and more instructive than that face-to-face dialogue."

3. GAINING EXPOSURE

Art trails are great value for money in terms of marketing. You will benefit from the experience of the coordinating team in advertising the event locally and nationally. A good art trail will attract the participation of some very experienced artists too. So, as a new artist, it's a great chance to meet those more established in the field. I have gained many valued friends and mentors, upon whom I regularly call for advice.

4. MEETING LIKE-MINDED SOULS

Many of the artists taking part in trails advertise their own classes or workshops. Many of the groups also welcome new members. Joining a group or a class locally can be a great way to extend the benefits of taking part in an art trail.

Artist Richard Howell features on the cover of our brochure this year and summed up his trail experience: "I've been involved in the Wylde Valley Art Trail since its conception and sat on the steering committee in its early years, so I remember the very first trail well. I had a studio at the bottom of our garden. Art trails back then were a relatively new concept. I admired the dedication of the general public who seemed to relish finding the studios and workspaces, quite often off the beaten track. It was, and is, a great introduction for artist and viewer."

5. FINDING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

I found that after taking part in a few consecutive trails, I started to get invited to take part in local group exhibitions. This led to my work being seen by an art consultant, Tom Tempest Radford, and, through this connection, I was lucky enough to be commissioned to paint 64 paintings for the new P&O cruise ship, *Britannia*. I now also sell my paintings through several galleries. My own story most definitely started with an art trail and it will continue to be a benchmark in my calendar as my work and career develops.

The Wylde Valley Art Trail 2015 runs from the 23-31 May.

For more details, visit www.wvat.co.uk



MASTERCLASS

HARBOUR

Impressions

LEADING WEST COUNTRY ARTIST **RAY BALKWILL** SHOWS YOU HOW TO CAPTURE AN ATMOSPHERIC HARBOUR SCENE BY USING THIN LAYERS OF OIL PAINT IN A WAY THAT IS SUGGESTIVE AND WATERCOLOUR-LIKE

56 Artists & Illustrators

Painting boats and harbours is a joy, the mere thought of which gets me reaching for my brushes. However, it's not always plain sailing as harbours can contain a wealth of complex material with much to take into consideration. The tip here is to not be too ambitious, concentrate on what interests you and keep it simple.

This demonstration is a good example of simplification, for here I focused on just three boats within a busy scene. My main objectives were to create an atmospheric painting with a limited palette of colours. Incorporating energy in the work was also an important requirement. Although this comes most naturally when painting on location, it can also be achieved in the studio, by working quickly to ensure spontaneity.

Harbours interest me more at low tide than when the water is fully in – pools, mud, seaweed and rusting chains can offer the opportunity for wonderful contrasts of colour, texture and shapes within your painting. Low tide also means boats are less likely to be taken out any time soon and there is the chance to observe the whole of the hulls. Bringing the two elements of observation and memory together is a good way of editing out all the complexities of nature, and keeping the painting both simple and alive. Above everything else though, try and remain faithful to the original idea.

www.raybalkwill.co.uk

YOU WILL NEED

• OIL COLOURS

Naples Yellow, French Ultramarine, Cerulean Blue, Burnt Sienna, Raw Umber, Rose Madder, Sap Green and Titanium White, all Daler-Rowney Artists' Oil Colour

• SUPPORT

Primed MDF board, 30x36cm

• BRUSHES

Royal & Langnickel flat, 1/2";
Daler-Rowney 'Sapphire' round, size 4;
SAA Silver rigger, size 2

• WHITE SPIRIT AND TURPS

• A PLASTIC RULER

• RAGS

• WINSOR & NEWTON

RETOUCHING VARNISH



1 START WITH A SKETCH

For studio work, I prefer to refer to monochrome felt-tip and charcoal sketch because they allow me to see the tonal values and composition more clearly. A sketch also acts as an *aide-mémoire* and rekindles the initial emotions, allowing me to interpret the colours more intuitively.



2 ESTABLISH THE COMPOSITION

I primed my MDF support with three coats of acrylic gesso, adding a small quantity of texture paste to the third layer. I then stained the board using a diluted wash of Raw Umber. When this was dry I sketched out some constructional lines to establish broadly the composition with a size 4 round brush and a dilute mix of French Ultramarine and Burnt Sienna.



3 WORK TONALLY

Using a 1/2" flat brush and the same dilute mix of French Ultramarine and Burnt Sienna, I blocked in the tones here, which is vital for establishing a firm foundation upon which the picture can be built. I find the key to a successful oil picture lies in the first half an hour of painting. If the shapes and tonal foundation are not working by that point, then I tend to struggle later on.



4 SURPRISE YOURSELF

One essential ingredient in my painting process is unpredictability, or the element of surprise. This is easier to attain in watercolour, but trickier with oils. However, applying a little white spirit to the board, and letting it merge with the wet paint can create exciting results. I found it particularly useful for adding textural interest in the foreground here.



5 DETERMINE CONTRASTS

To paint accurate tones, I find it necessary to establish the lightest light and the darkest dark at an early stage. With a turps-laden rag I created highlights by lifting out some of the background colour. Further darks were added to suggest the boats and their reflections, using a size 4 round brush and a mix of French Ultramarine and Burnt Sienna.



6 DECIDE ON A MOOD

To establish colour in the sky and water I started with Naples Yellow, adding small amounts of Titanium White and Rose Madder to the mix. I applied it with a 1/2" flat brush, working lightly to create a drybrush effect. This technique not only allows some of the original ground colour to show through, but also makes use of the MDF's surface texture.

7 KEEP THINGS RELEVANT

If parts of a painting are getting too fussy, I will often resort to blending these areas in order to focus more on what is relevant. I used my finger to blend the sky colours and also soften hard edges elsewhere, such as the building on the distant hills.



8 REFINE AND MODIFY

With a 1/2" flat brush I painted the hills with French Ultramarine and Naples Yellow, allowing the under-painting to show through in places. With a size 4 round brush, I added Cerulean Blue, Rose Madder and Titanium White to the sky, echoing the colour in the tide pools and blending it with my finger to soften.



9 TIE THINGS UP

Using the same mix and a size 2 rigger brush, I painted the highlights on the gunwales (the upper edges of the side of the boats). I used a size 4 round brush for the right-hand boat's hull and added a touch of Titanium White to the mix to lighten the bow. This colour was also applied to the tide pools, which also helped link the whole picture together.



10 DEVELOP THE FORM

I sharpened the end of a brush handle and used it to scrape out details, such as the boats' numbers on the hull. I also highlighted the shape of the bow of the left-hand fishing boat with this technique, as well as applying it to the reflections. This technique is particularly useful for reaffirming the drawing if the shape of a boat is not accurate.



11 ADD THE DETAILS

The masts and rigging were put in with the size 2 rigger and a mix of French Ultramarine and Burnt Sienna. In order to get them straight, I used a ruler on its side and ran the ferrule of the brush along it. Remember to keep the detail simple; it is far more important to capture the shape and character of a boat.

Top tip

AVOID MUDDYING
BY MIXING A NEW
COLOUR WITH JUST
TWO PIGMENTS –
THREE AT MOST



12 FINISHING TOUCHES

I checked the painting from a distance before making final adjustments. I used the size 4 round brush and a mix of Sap Green with a little Naples Yellow to paint the foreground sand and spatter to suggest stones – an effective way of adding interest to an area of flat colour. Finally a few flicks of the rigger brush suggested the ropes.

Refresh YOUR PALETTE

TRY OUT AN ECLECTIC MIX OF NEW AND UNUSUAL PIGMENTS RECOMMENDED BY OUR COLOUR EXPERTS. PHOTO: LOUISE HAGGER

OCEAN BLUES

Unison Colour has just launched a set of 12 brand new bright and breezy pastels inspired by the hues of the sea – perfect for any artist heading to the coast this summer. The collection has been developed with the help of leading American artist Zaria Forman, after she asked the British company to develop the perfect 'iceberg' blue.

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www.unisoncolour.com



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In ancient times, the gland of a snail was used to create this colour but thankfully you won't need to go to such lengths to enjoy it. This finely translucent shade from Schmincke's historical Mussini range is cooler than magenta and perfect for painting your summer blooms, such as the Purple Iris.
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www.schmincke.com

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SELF-PORTRAIT IN *watercolour*

SKY ARTS PORTRAIT ARTIST OF THE YEAR FINALIST **AINE DIVINE** PRESENTS A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO CREATING AN EXPRESSIVE LIKENESS IN THE MIRROR

I love to paint portraits in watercolour. The translucent layers are perfect for describing skin and the darks can be layered to achieve a drama not usually associated with the medium. For a more expressive finish, begin with an air of abandon – try to achieve a looseness in the first layers that will feed into the finished piece.

Your pose and set up is important. To lend your self-portrait a more dynamic feel, consider having one shoulder higher than the other, or perhaps tilt your head or turn it to one side. Place your easel upright and angle it slightly so that you can easily see yourself and your page by only moving your eyes. Also notice how I placed the paper on the left

edge of the drawing board, so there were no obstacles between my image in the mirror and my support. Keep your materials in easy reach and try to paint from the shoulder, standing at arm's length from the easel.

I hope this demonstration will encourage you to take a fearless approach to painting self-portraits. It is important to pay close attention to your mirror image throughout this process and also remember that it is always possible to lift off colour if required. Above all, I hope that you will discover the joy of using watercolour expressively. Experimentation is the best way of finding out how something works.

www.ainedivinepaintings.co.uk

YOU WILL NEED

• SUPPORT

535gsm NOT watercolour paper, 76x56cm

• WATERCOLOUR

Viridian, Permanent Sap Green, French Ultramarine, Cerulean Blue, Alizarin Crimson, Cadmium Red, Yellow Ochre, Lemon Yellow, Vandyke Brown and Burnt Sienna, all Winsor & Newton Professional Water Colour

• BRUSHES

Oval wash, sizes 1/2", 3/4" and 1"; flat, sizes 1", 2" and 3"; round sable, size 8, all Royal & Langnickel



1 MAP OUT SHADOWS

The light was falling on the left side of my face as I was looking at it. Half closing my eyes I identified the general shape of the shadow on the other half of my face and mapped it out with a 2" flat brush using a mix of Alizarin Crimson, Permanent Sap Green and Yellow Ochre. Large flat brushes are the most economical way of describing the big areas of tone at this initial stage.



2 CUT CLEAN LINES

By just placing the edge of the 2" flat brush lightly onto the paper, I made a clean line to illustrate where the face stops and the space around it starts. The collar of my Ultramarine Blue jumper was also described in this way – I placed the brush on the edge of the shoulder and pulled it down. I love to allow the paint to run and drip. As Paul Klee once said, "Make chance essential".



3 PLOT THE MAIN SHAPES

While the face dried, I continued to plot the larger shapes. It was useful to begin the hair here, using a mix of French Ultramarine and Vandyke Brown, to give the face structure. I held the brush vertically to allow the paint to run down more freely. Elsewhere, I allowed pools of pigment to accumulate in places to help indicate tone – for example, in the hollow of the neck and the skin at the collar. >

4 TURN ON ITS HEAD!

Having used fairly wet paint to indicate my hair, I turned the board for a while to avoid the darker colour running into the lighter skin areas. Turning your painting upside down for a few moments can take the pressure off a bit and allow you some breathing space. I was happy with the drips that emerged from each turn of the board, feeling they anchored the figure in space.

Top tip

WATERCOLOUR
DRIES LIGHTER
SO GO BACK AND
DEEPEN TONES
IF REQUIRED

6 DEVELOP THE BACKGROUND

I focused attention on my face in the mirror all the way through this painting, making fresh marks as I make new discoveries. Here that involved developing the shadow of the right-hand eye socket and also clarifying the light side of the face again. I did this by drawing the background up to the edge of the neck and face using a mix of Permanent Sap Green with a little French Ultramarine and Vandyke Brown. The paint was still quite fluid here. At no point should you feel like you are pushing the paint around with your brush.



5 BE BOLD WITH COLOUR

I started to be a bit bolder with the darker colours here. I used a less-dilute mix of Alizarin Crimson and Viridian and a little Cadmium Red to position the features and build up the form through the shadow shapes. The line dividing the lips is a helpful one to establish at this point, as you can then bring some shadow into the upper lip and distribute some of that same colour elsewhere. I also indicated the shoulder more firmly with an opaque blue stroke.



7 FIND A NEW ANGLE

I turned the board on its side to encourage some of the darks to accumulate at the right side of the face. This also allowed the dark skin tone of the neck to well up in the edge between the skin and the white T-shirt. While the painting was on its side, I took the opportunity to place another dark French Ultramarine stroke on the shoulder, as this time it would run away from the figure along the shoulder's edge.



8 DEEPEN TONES

When the skin on the face was dry, I used a mix of Alizarin Crimson and Viridian to firm up the form of the face, re-establishing the direction of the eyebrows and cleanly drawing the line of the jaw. I added a bit of French Ultramarine and Vandyke Brown to darken the tone of the hair. The warm tones in the ear and other parts of the skin were made with a wash of Cadmium Orange, Cadmium Red and a touch of French Ultramarine.



9 PATCH IN COLOURS

I like to build up water colour in patches, often floating it on top of the dry layers underneath, so that the colours merge in the places where the paper is still slightly damp. The colour mixes were varied according to the warm and cool areas I identified on my face in the mirror. The colour below is also a factor so, for example, if you want a greenish patch of skin to be warmer, a wash of Cadmium Red or Alizarin Crimson over the top will do it. To paint the neck, I used a mix of Permanent Sap Green and Burnt Sienna.

10 USE COLOUR TO DRAW OUT

Whenever I feel I'm getting too involved in one area, I step back and do something general elsewhere. A good way of doing that is turning the board. I like to anchor the painting on a diagonal sometimes to create a new direction for the runs to go in.

I used a warm Cadmium Red mix with a little Viridian here to bring out the nose, as it was merging into the face too much. >



11 FLIP AND DRIP

The board was upside down here because I wanted the drips of paint to describe the line of the jaw where the shadow moves into the light. To control the drips, I first create a channel of clean water and then drop in the colour to be transported along.



Top tip

WEDGE YOUR PALETTE UNDER A BUTTERFLY SCREW ON YOUR EASEL TO SAVE CARRYING IT



12 LOCATE THE FEATURES

To create sufficiently dark tones in the face, I made a pool of the required colour that is loaded with pigment yet still fluid. This way the brush is always wet enough so that the bristles don't separate and you have more control over the shape you're painting.

To identify the right tones, I half closed my eyes to blur my vision and disregard the details of the features. Doing this allowed me to better see the dark and light patches that ultimately located the features on the face.



13 CONTROL THE HIGHLIGHTS

I painted the details of the features simultaneously, adding darks to the eyes, nostril and mouth. To create a spot highlight, I let an area dry and then used a clean, damp 1/2" brush to gently agitate the paper and lift off some of the pigment. The most useful tone to establish is the upper surface of the lower lid that catches the light. I added a few unexpected colours here too: a line of clean Cadmium Orange to outline the light side of the face, and patches of Cerulean Blue under the eyebrow and nose to help lift and contrast.



14 FINISHING TOUCHES

Some parts of the skin were lacking warmth so I applied a wash of Yellow Ochre and Cadmium Red with the 2" brush. Then, working from the shoulder, I added broad strokes of French Ultramarine to the jumper.

I sometimes find that once an image has been described in strong tones it can be helpful to lose it a little again. Loading a wide brush with various watery, grey mixes can be useful for this, as you can splash the paint on. There is something satisfying about finishing with a few expressive strokes.



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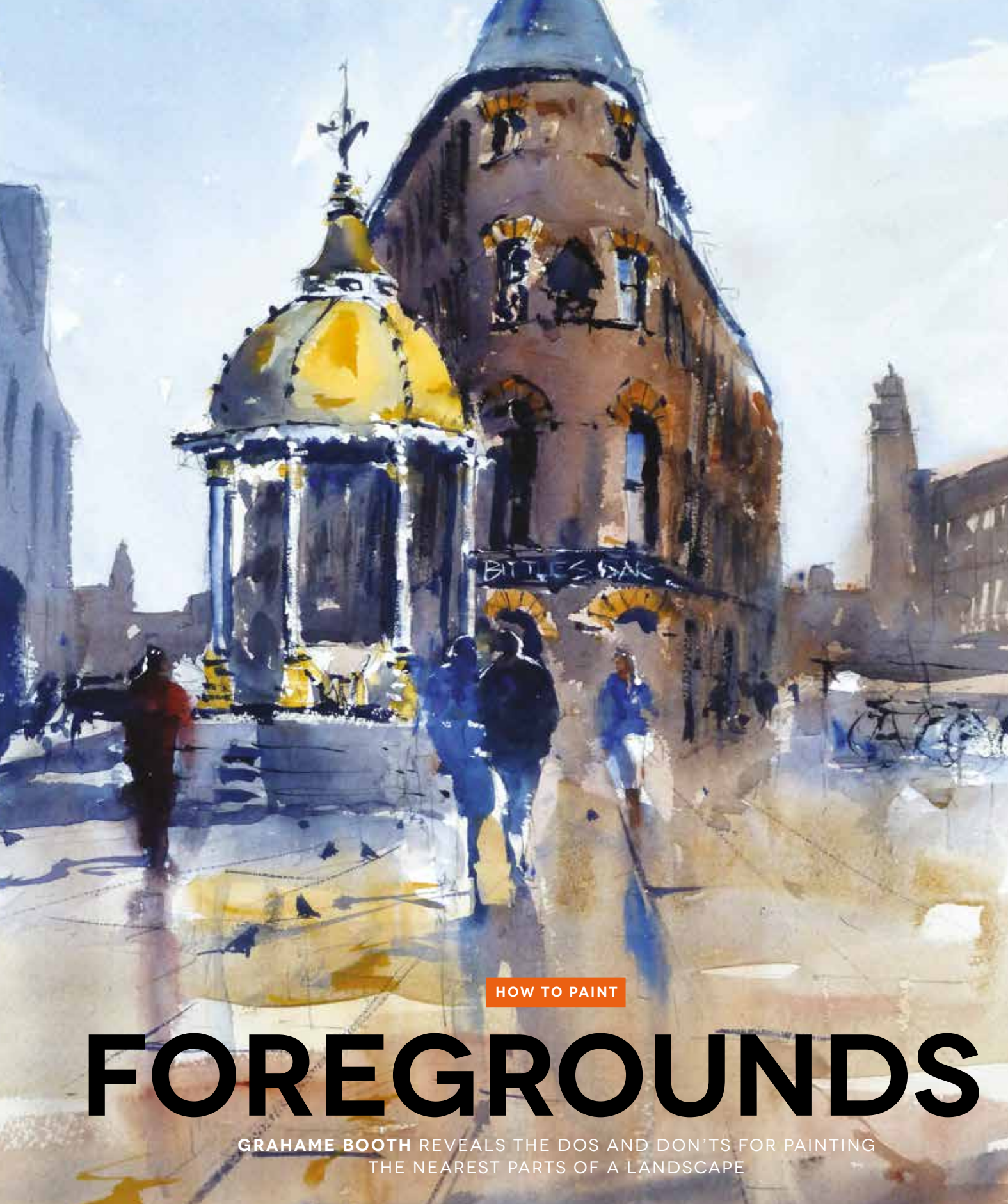


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HOW TO PAINT

FOREGROUNDS

GRAHAME BOOTH REVEALS THE DOS AND DON'TS FOR PAINTING
THE NEAREST PARTS OF A LANDSCAPE

Although it may appear to be somewhat contradictory, an unimportant foreground is often very important. A simple foreground allows the eye to travel unimpeded to the main focal area of a painting. Painters sometimes have difficulties with foregrounds, often when they have tried to make them too interesting.

It is important then to become aware of the difference between an interesting foreground and an interestingly painted foreground. You can still make your brushstrokes interesting in terms of their colour and tone without overcomplicating them by creating too much detail. Sometimes simple is best. Here are some dos and don'ts that might help you achieve this.

DO allocate between one quarter and one third of the height of your painting to foreground. This will give a suitable proportion of 'breathing space' before your eye arrives at the main focus. Failing to leave this space can result in a seemingly cluttered composition.

DON'T fall into the trap of painting something just because it is there. Leaving something out can be just as valid as putting it in. Have a mental tidy up of the foreground before you begin painting.

DO use leading lines to direct the eye. These may be quite obvious lines, such as joints between paving stones, or more gentle suggestions, such as vague shadows or lines of grass. I try to imagine the foreground being tiled and then think how the lines of perspective would look. I then try to subtly emulate these imaginary lines. Don't be afraid to rearrange the direction of paving stones to suit your subject or even to introduce some if you are faced with featureless concrete or tarmac. Even if there is nothing actually there, it is generally best to paint something.

DON'T place strong, isolated shapes in the foreground. Linking smaller shapes to make larger shapes is almost always a good thing to do and it is even better if you can link the foreground shapes to the focal area shapes. If isolated shapes must go in, avoid the extreme bottom edge and corners. Strong shapes in the corners lead the eye in that direction and out of the frame. Instead try to arrange them so that they point to the focal area.

DO take plenty of photos. If you like to paint from photographs, remember that your camera will not record much of the immediate foreground. In this digital age, it costs nothing to point the camera down a little and take a second shot. In my paintings, my foreground often begins just in front of my feet.



OPPOSITE PAGE *Bittles Bar, Belfast*, watercolour on Bockingford NOT 200gsm paper, 36x49cm

"The foreground was initially painted very softly. Zigzagging brushstrokes and paving stone lines were then added to lead the eye towards the figures."

RIGHT *Malcesine, Lake Garda*, watercolour on Bockingford NOT 200gsm paper, 36x49cm

"The foreground fills about 25% of the height of this picture. A strong shadow touched the bottom edge and linked to the shadows elsewhere."

BELOW *Cotignac, Provence*, watercolour on Bockingford NOT 200gsm paper,

"Allowing the trees to softly blend together and fade out towards the bottom corners of the picture keeps the eye focused on the buildings."



DON'T use too many brushstrokes in the foreground. A few large strokes are much more effective than a lot of smaller ones.

DO darken the tonal strength of washes towards the bottom of the picture. Darker edges, particularly at the bottom help to contain and emphasise the light in your painting. A shadow along the bottom edge is a common but very effective device to add a frame to a foreground. Make sure the shadow appears to continue out of the lower edge.

DON'T include too many hard edges in the foreground. Keep the edges of your foreground washes soft and they will be less likely to distract the eye from the chosen area of focus. Tufts of grass can become very fussy if not controlled. I find that dabbing the wet tufts here and there with a finger makes them much less obvious.

DO keep the foreground washes warm. Raising the colour temperature can make an area appear to come forward. Using Raw Sienna or Burnt Sienna is a good choice, though some artists prefer Indian Yellow or even Naples Yellow. (Be careful with the Naples Yellow as it contains white and can be opaque in strong washes). The reverse of this method is true too – a cooler wash can have the effect of pushing a background further away. Cobalt Blue would be my choice here; use it strong enough to see the effect, but not so strong as to turn everything bright blue.
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HOW TO

PAINT ACCURATE tones

ANNA MASON REVEALS A SIMPLE WAY TO GIVE YOUR PAINTINGS ADDED DEPTH AND REALISM

Our perception of tone, or how light or dark something appears to us, is influenced by the tones that we also see around it – and that's true no matter what the colour is we're looking at. This effect is most notable when mid-tones are compared to lightest and darkest tones; against the darkest they look lighter and against the lightest they look darker (see box, below right).

To accurately assess a mid-tone, we need to be able to compare it to the lightest and darkest adjacent tones. This is fundamental to the process of painting, particularly if we are looking to achieve realism in our work. Given that tone is relative, we are unlikely to be able to get the tonal balance in our paintings right from the outset. It's actually not until we've painted all the main elements of the composition that we can really assess the tones relative to one another and adjust them until they appear accurate.

When you are painting with oils or acrylics, it is far easier to adjust your tones right up until the end of the process, making them darker or lighter as required. Unfortunately, however, that's not the case when working with my beloved medium, watercolour.

Watercolour relies on the light colour of the paper being visible through transparent paint layers to create the lightest tones within a composition. As a result, once an area has been darkened too much, it can't be corrected easily. Unless you resort to applying a heavy layer of a lighter, opaque gouache, the transparency of watercolour means the dark paint underneath will still be visible. The paint could be dabbed off a little if the area is too dark, but even that can be tricky.

When working with watercolour, we must be cautious in our approach to laying down tones so as not to make any area too dark. The obvious approach then is to gradually apply darker colours, working progressively from the lightest to the darkest tones. If you choose to work in this way, you will be painting mid-tones before you have any dark tones in place for comparison. This makes the mid-tones harder to assess and the upshot can be that paintings created this way don't ever get



the darkest tones quite dark enough, resulting in a less three-dimensional look.

However, if you lay down just a few of the darkest tones straight after the lightest tones then the upper and lower ends of the painting's tonal range will be visible on the paper, making it much easier to assess the contrast levels as you work on the mid-tones. While this approach is particularly important for watercolour, it applies equally well when painting with oils or acrylics. Give it a go and watch your paintings 'pop' off the page.

Anna specialises in botanical and realistic watercolours. She offers online video tuition (including a free class) at www.annamasonart.com

ABOVE Tawny Owl, watercolour on paper, 36x49cm

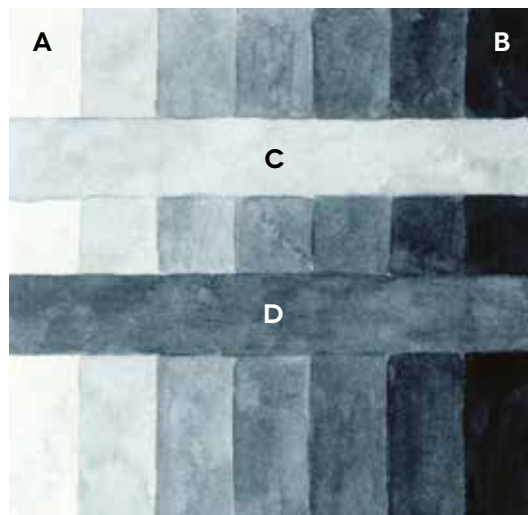
Top tip

TONE IS RELATIVE.
FOR ACCURACY,
PAINT THE LIGHTEST
AND DARKEST
AREAS FIRST



LEFT Tawny Owl in progress:
“I began by painting the lightest feather tones and the very dark eyes. By doing this, I had the upper and lower parts of the tonal range in place and could more easily assess my mid-tones in relation to these two extremes.”

IT'S ALL RELATIVE! TONE EXPLAINED



The two vertical, mid-tone bands are consistent in tone, but appear to be lighter or darker depending on the relative lightness or darkness of the background. For example, if you look at column A in isolation, both of the horizontal stripes (C and D) appear darker in comparison. However, if you only look at column B, both of those same stripes now appear lighter than the background colour. The tone of the stripes hasn't changed, only our perception of it in relation to the adjacent tones.

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DRAWING FOR PAINTERS

NOT SURE WHAT INFORMATION TO INCLUDE IN A PREPARATORY SKETCH? **CARL PURCELL** SHOWS HOW TO EXPAND THE POSSIBILITIES OF YOUR NEXT PAINTING PROJECT

Most of the drawing classes I attended at college revolved around the rendering of items: how to draw shapes, how to conduct a productive search for relationships of size, angles and position, how to render the shading on a rounded surface, and so on. Meanwhile, the drawing advice I received in my painting classes was simple: make a drawing before making a painting. No one ever addressed the question, "What information should a drawing contain that will make for a stronger painting?"

Drawing in preparation for a painting turns the skill of drawing into a powerful tool for investigation and exploration. Instead of drawing in order to duplicate appearance, we are drawing to understand what visual qualities in a particular subject caught our attention; to understand what salient characteristics of shape and pattern are presented by the subject, and how we can arrange them for maximum visual effect.

It is only when we get past all of the usual genre classifications (landscape, floral, still life, figurative, etc.) and begin to talk about what paintings are really made of, that we discover the only things we can really paint are shapes and lines.

It's that simple. All paintings are linear patterns and shapes of a particular hue or value. It is how we *arrange* those shapes and lines that is the real art. Drawing is the artist's means for exploring the endless possibilities for arranging those particular shapes and lines, regardless of what they represent, into an effective composition. This is where drawing pushes beyond mimicking the appearance of a subject and into the exploration of that subject's potential for a painting. By using drawing in this way, you can discover what you like about the subject and how you are going to communicate that in your painting.

SKETCHING RHYTHMS

To illustrate the point let me take you to Ashburton, a small, medieval town in Devon, England. During a recent visit, I was attracted to the collection of shapes on display in this storefront scene. It wasn't the shapes



themselves, but rather the repetition of those shapes creating a rhythm of visual excitement that drew my eye.

A drawing that faithfully reproduced the scene would not help me see this as a painting. In fact, it would be of no more use to me in that regard than the photo itself. And ultimately, if I wanted to end up with an exact replica of the subject as it appears in my photo, then why not just hang the photo on the wall and save myself the effort of painting?

Painting an exact likeness is not for me. I wanted to explore the arrangement of shapes instead, so my initial drawing was not a faithful rendering of the scene

TOP The original scene that caught Carl's eye in Ashburton, Devon
ABOVE His initial sketch mapping out the arrangement of shapes



(something that could take an hour or more), but rather a quick response to the patterns I observed, executed with a nearly continuous contour line in about five minutes.

The drawing helped me to focus on what interested me: that rhythmic dance of small shapes. A realistic drawing of each item would have shifted my focus from pattern to item identification, and my mode of thinking would have shifted from visual pattern to data.

The next step is to assign a value to those shapes. Or, even better, to build a pattern of values that tie this pattern of shapes together. It took another 10 minutes but, by doing so, I began to get a better idea of how the painting might look. I estimate that every minute spent on this initial drawing saved me at least 20 minutes on the painting – a saving of about five hours that I would otherwise have spent attempting to make it ‘work’.

The final painting was made with little reference to my photo, apart from checking a few details at the very end. By referring instead to my drawing, I was able to retain that sense of energy and freshness. My one concession was the title: *Shopping*. I thought that the painting’s real subject (“a dancing pattern of small shapes across a simple wash”) was not a title that everyone could appreciate. >



TOP LEFT Carl developed that initial sketch by adding a pattern of darker tones
LEFT *Shopping*, watercolour on Arches 300gsm rough paper, 28x35cm

GROW YOUR PHOTOS

Late one evening, before the sun set on the River Dart, my wife and I went for a stroll with her sister and brother-in-law. My day of painting was over and this was supposed to be a family evening. However, I didn't have my eyes closed, and so naturally when I looked across the river and saw the light dancing across a row of boat hulls, my artistic heart did a little dance of its own. I didn't have my sketchpad with me (and the others would not have waited for me anyway), so I lifted my camera and snapped a photo instead, before rejoining the group and continuing our riparian stroll.

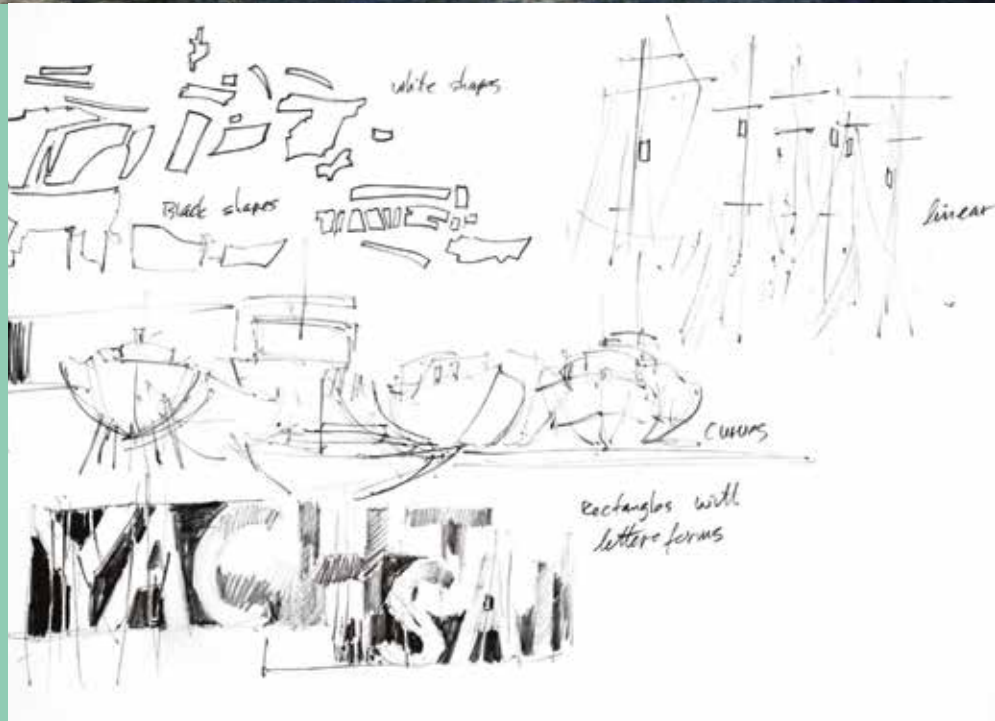
It was one of those times when a camera is a very valuable tool. Without it, I could never have captured those beautiful white shapes dancing across that dark background, or remembered those countering vertical lines that I knew would make a good subject.

Back in the studio a few months later, I examined the photograph. It wasn't as good as I had remembered; photos never are. I often feel as if my camera is on a different trip to my eyes and my sketchbook. Part of the reason for this is that when I see a scene I have ideas about it and I associate it with other patterns, other experiences or even other paintings. If I have my sketchbook to hand, this all goes into the initial drawing. My camera can't replicate this – it only records, and it does so without emotion and associative ideas.

Nevertheless, something of the melodic pattern of light shapes was still there, countered by the vertical soprano notes of the masts. I took out my Bristol pad and began an exploration of the visual motifs presented by the photo. I made contour line studies of the white shapes formed by the sun-struck parts of each boat hull. This is important because it took me out of "boat" thinking and into "value shape" thinking. I can't emphasise how important it is to make this cognitive shift from data concepts to visual concepts. The first is about identifying what we see, while the second is about observing the configuration of shapes.

I then explored some of the dark shapes in a similar way and tried to get a feeling for the linear pattern of the masts and rigging. Next came a quick assessment of the curves presented by the hulls and railings and the painted lines along the tops of the hulls. Finally, I looked at the rectangular shapes behind the boats and discovered the sign for "yacht sales". The shapes of the letters seemed like an interesting additional motif, so I did a little study of those, alternating the values from light against dark to dark against light. This acquainted me with all the visual motifs involved in the scene.

Having deconstructed the scene in my first sketch, I then wanted my second drawing to explore the possibilities for a pattern of darker values that would tie it all together. I didn't want to replicate the value pattern in the photo – a dark background with light shapes running across it – as I wanted my subsequent painting to be lighter, more joyous. To achieve this, I put the motifs together in a couple of different sketched



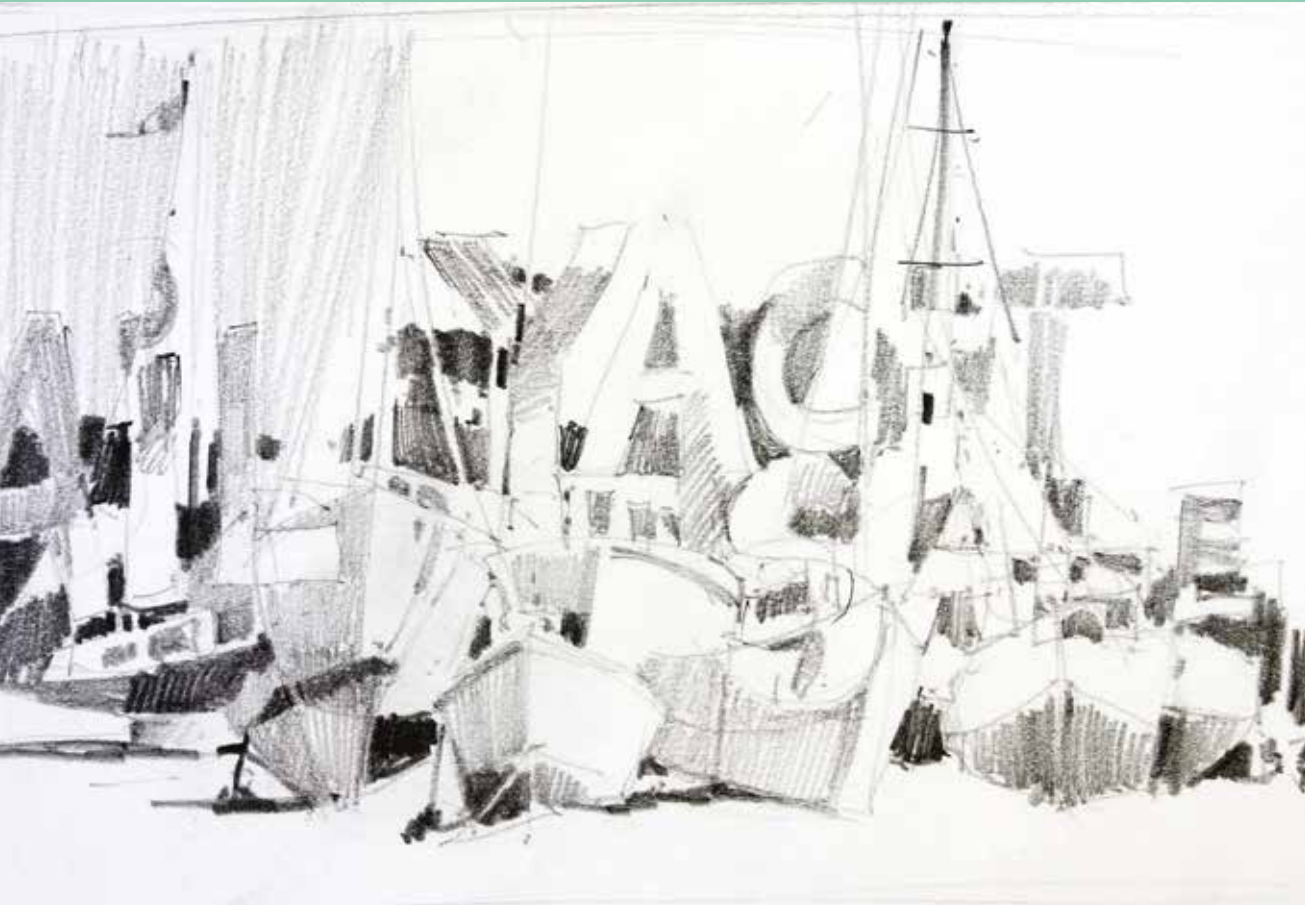
TOP Carl's photo of the boats on the River Dart

TOP The initial sketch, which focused on the value shapes and visual motifs

arrangements. I came up with two that I liked and chose the second one, which is shown here.

The final painting grew out of this sketch. I must emphasise the word "grew", for painting is an organic process; one in which an idea is planted (the photo, in this case), nourished into germination (the studies of motifs), tended into a fully-grown specimen (the value studies), and then brought into fruition (the final painting). It is "finished" when it stops growing.

You can see in the final image that all of the ideas combined to produce the painting. If I had simply copied the photo, the painting would never have been allowed to grow into this final form. The act of mimicking the photo would have cut off the growth process before the very first shoots.



LEFT The second drawing with Carl's value studies
BELOW *Yacht Sales*, watercolour on Arches 300gsm cold-pressed paper, 35x53cm





VISUAL THINKING

While Yacht Sales involved a deeper exploration of the motifs presented by the subject, I am usually just attracted to a grouping of shapes that needs no such dismantling. If I like an arrangement as I find it, it is often the different value relationships that I want to explore further. In these cases, a small drawing can help me to see what the final painting would look like if these changes were applied, a kind of “visual thinking”.

For example, I liked the grouping of shapes in the above photo I took at a local farm. The building shapes were fine and I liked the fence leading up to them. However, I wasn't too keen on the background, so in my initial drawing I made a few changes, moving the dead tree to the right and darkening the tonal value of the other trees. I like the new simplified arrangement, but I was still left wondering, “What if...?”

That question always leads to an enjoyable exploration. Drawing is so direct, and has almost none of the technical considerations that come with paint, like the wetness of the paper or the relative transparency of the various pigments. Working small allows you to make an immediate statement as well. That first drawing only took 10 minutes, yet it solved so many problems that it becomes a no-brainer kind of investment – of course it will pay high dividends.

Despite the progress made with this first drawing, I like to have options from which to choose and sometimes more than one variation will become a painting. In the second drawing, I wondered how the

TOP LEFT The original scene of farm buildings
ABOVE LEFT Carl's first sketch, which simplified the composition

TOP RIGHT The second sketch added a darker sky and zigzag fence
ABOVE RIGHT *Family Group*, watercolour on Arches 300gsm rough paper, 28x35cm

appearance of the scene might alter if I added a dark sky behind the lighter trees and also what would happen if I changed the direction of the fence. When I sketched it out, I found it gave me a zigzag movement of countering diagonals that I particularly liked.

I decided to base my painting on the second drawing, but I will not discard the first of the two. I still like it, and I may paint it too. I love the spontaneity of watercolour, especially the way in which it allows the painting to talk to me during the process.

The resulting painting is stronger for going through this relatively quick drawing stage first – not only did it help acquaint me with the subject, but it also allowed me to consider strategies for the pending painting.

Drawing can help us visualise new possibilities for a painting and look beyond the realities of the subject itself. It's a powerful tool if you use it wisely.

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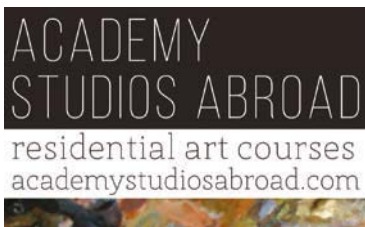


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PARKER

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THE BIG PAINTING CHALLENGE

MY EARLY INSPIRATION

I grew up in a very liberal household where it was fine to create a mess in the name of creativity. When I wasn't covered in paint, I would flick through art history books – my dad's an art teacher so there are lots of them. I thought the Impressionist paintings were magical.

MY DREAM PAINTING TO OWN

Pierre-Auguste Renoir's *The Gust of Wind* (1).

I look at it in the Fitzwilliam Museum whenever I'm struggling with an essay or just having a bad day. To look at it really wakes you up – it's painting's answer to a double espresso.

MY COFFEE-TABLE READ

The Art of Looking Sideways by Alan Fletcher. It's a wonderful collection of doodles, quotations and anecdotes, lighthearted but also strangely profound.

MY NEW FAVOURITE LOCATION

I'd never been to **Liverpool (3)** before *The Big Painting Challenge*, but I fell in love with it. The people were warm, the atmosphere vibrant and the culture beautiful and rich. I'd love to visit again soon.

MY FAVOURITE ART SHOP

I have just spent five months in Paris and I stumbled upon Sennelier, the art shop where Picasso and Cézanne would buy their materials. I spent ages exploring every corner.

MY ESSENTIAL ART PRODUCT

Thick, flat Winsor & Newton brushes (2). They allow for big, expressive strokes. I've never been one for tiny details.

MY IDEAL STUDIO SOUNDTRACK

1950s jazz (4). I love to listen to all kinds of music while I paint but that is one of my favourite genres.

MY LAST FAVOURITE EXHIBITION

Rembrandt: *The Late Works* at the National Gallery. I definitely came out feeling a little bit more human than when I went in. I spent so much time sketching in the gallery that they tried to chuck me out.

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